

**RACE &
CLASS**

*Orientalism
Reconsidered*

EDWARD SAID

The US stake in
South Africa

RAYMOND LOTTA

Women and the revolution
in Cuba

The Italo-Ethiopian Crisis

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Orientalism reconsidered

The problems that I'd like to take up each derive from the general issues addressed in *Orientalism*. The most important of these are: the representation of other cultures, societies, histories; the relationship between power and knowledge; the role of the intellectual; the methodological questions that have to do with the relationships between different kinds of texts, between text and context, between text and history.

I should clarify a couple of things at the outset. First, I use the word 'Orientalism' less to refer to my book than to the problems to which my book is related; I shall be dealing with the intellectual and political territory covered both by *Orientalism* (the book) as well as the work I have done since. Second, I would not want it to be thought that this is an attempt to answer my critics. *Orientalism* elicited a great deal of comment, much of it positive and instructive; a fair amount of it was hostile and in some cases abusive. But the fact is that I have not digested and understood everything that was written or said. Instead, I have grasped those questions raised by my critics which strike me as useful in focussing an argument. Other observations – like my exclusion of German Orientalism, which no one has given any reason for me to have *included* – have frankly struck me as superficial, and there seems no point in responding to them. Similarly, the claim made by some, that I am ahistorical and inconsistent, would have more interest if the virtues of

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consistency, whatever may be intended by the term, were subjected to rigorous analysis; as for my ahistoricity, that too is a charge weightier in assertion than in proof.

As a department of thought and expertise, Orientalism of course involves several overlapping aspects: first, the changing historical and cultural relationship between Europe and Asia, a relationship with a 4,000-year-old history; second, the scientific discipline in the West according to which, beginning in the early nineteenth century, one specialised in the study of various Oriental cultures and traditions; and third, the ideological suppositions, images and fantasies about a region of the world called the Orient. The common denominator between these three aspects of Orientalism is the line separating Occident from Orient, and this, I have argued, is less a fact of nature than it is a fact of human production, which I have called imaginative geography. This, however, does not mean that the division between Orient and Occident is unchanging, nor that it is simply fictional. It is to say – emphatically – that, as with all aspects of what Vico calls the world of nations, the Orient and the Occident are facts produced by human beings, and as such must be studied as integral components of the social, and not the divine or natural, world. And because the social world includes the person or subject doing the studying as well as the object or realm being studied, it is imperative to include them both in any consideration of Orientalism. Obviously enough, there could be no Orientalism without, on the one hand, the Orientalists, and on the other, the Orientals.

This is, in reality, a fact basic to any theory of interpretation, or hermeneutics. Yet there is still a remarkable unwillingness to discuss the problems of Orientalism in the political or ethical or even epistemological contexts proper to it. This is as true of professional literary critics who have written about my book, as it is of the Orientalists themselves. Since it seems to me patently impossible to dismiss the truth of Orientalism's political origin and its continuing political actuality, we are obliged on intellectual as well as political grounds to investigate the resistance to the politics of Orientalism, a resistance symptomatic precisely of what is denied.

If the first set of questions is concerned with the problems of Orientalism reconsidered from the standpoint of local issues like who writes or studies the Orient, in what institutional or discursive setting, for what audience, and with what ends in mind, the second set of questions takes us to a wider circle of issues. These are issues raised initially by methodology. They are considerably sharpened by questions as to how the production of knowledge best serves communal, as opposed to sectarian, ends; how knowledge that is non-dominative and non-coercive can be produced in a setting that is deeply inscribed with the politics, the considerations, the positions and the strategies of power. In these

methodological and moral re-considerations of Orientalism, I shall quite consciously allude to similar issues raised by the experiences of feminism or women's studies, black or ethnic studies, socialist and anti-imperialist studies, all of which take for their point of departure the right of formerly un- or mis-represented human groups to speak for and represent themselves in domains defined, politically and intellectually, as normally excluding them, usurping their signifying and representing functions, overriding their historical reality. In short, Orientalism reconsidered in this wider and libertarian optic entails nothing less than the creation of objects for a new kind of knowledge.

I should return to the local problems I mentioned first. The hindsight of authors not only stimulates in them a sense of regret at what they could or ought to have done but did not; it also gives them a wider perspective in which to comprehend what they did. In my own case, I have been helped to achieve this broader understanding by nearly everyone who wrote about my book, and who saw it – for better or worse – as being part of current debates, contested interpretations and actual conflicts in the Arab-Islamic world, as that world interacts with the United States and Europe. In my own rather limited case, the consciousness of being an Oriental goes back to my youth in colonial Palestine and Egypt, although the impulse to resist its accompanying impingements was nurtured in the post-Second World War environment of independence when Arab nationalism, Nasserism, the 1967 War, the rise of the Palestine national movement, the 1973 War, the Lebanese Civil War, the Iranian Revolution and its horrific aftermath, produced that extraordinary series of highs and lows which has neither ended nor allowed us a full understanding of its remarkable revolutionary impact. It is difficult to try to understand a region of the world whose principal features seem to be that it is in perpetual flux, and that no one trying to comprehend it can, by an act of pure will or of sovereign understanding, stand at some Archimedean point outside the flux. That is, the very reason for understanding the Orient generally, and the Arab world in particular, was first, that it prevailed upon one, beseeched one's attention urgently, whether for economic, political, cultural or religious reasons, and second, that it defied neutral, disinterested or stable definition.

Similar problems are commonplace in the interpretation of literary texts. Each age, for instance, re-interprets Shakespeare, not because Shakespeare changes, but because, despite the existence of numerous and reliable editions of Shakespeare, there is no such fixed and non-trivial object as Shakespeare independent of his editors, the actors who played his roles, the translators who put him in other languages, the hundreds of millions of readers who have read him or watched performances of his plays since the late sixteenth century. On the other hand, it is too much to say that Shakespeare has no independent existence at

all, and that he is completely reconstituted every time someone reads, acts or writes about him. In fact, Shakespeare leads an institutional or cultural life that among other things has guaranteed his eminence as a great poet, his authorship of thirty-odd plays, his extraordinary canonical powers in the West. The point I am making here is a rudimentary one: that even so relatively inert an object as a literary text is commonly supposed to gain some of its identity from its historical moment interacting with the attentions, judgements, scholarship and performances of its readers. But this privilege was rarely allowed the Orient, the Arabs or Islam, which separately or together were supposed by mainstream academic thought to be confined to the fixed status of an object frozen once and for all in time by the gaze of western percipients.

Far from being a defence either of the Arabs or Islam – as my book was taken by many to be – my argument was that neither existed except as ‘communities of interpretation’, and that, like the Orient itself, each designation represented interests, claims, projects, ambitions and rhetorics that were not only in violent disagreement, but were in a situation of open warfare. So saturated with meanings, so overdetermined by history, religion and politics are labels like ‘Arab’ or ‘Muslim’ as subdivisions of ‘The Orient’ that no one today can use them without some attention to the formidable polemical mediations that screen the objects, if they exist at all, that the labels designate.

The more such observations are made by one party, the more routinely they are denied by the other. Anyone who tries to suggest that nothing, not even a simple descriptive label, is beyond or outside the realm of interpretation is almost certain to find an opponent saying that science and learning are designed to transcend the vagaries of interpretation, and that objective truth is, in fact, attainable. This claim was more than a little political when used against Orientals who disputed the authority and objectivity of an Orientalism intimately allied with the great mass of European settlements in the Orient. At bottom, what I said in *Orientalism* had been said before me by A.L. Tibawi, by Abdullah Laroui, by Anwar Abdel Malek, by Talal Asad, by S.H. Alatas, by Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire, by Sardar K.M. Pannikar and Romila Thapar, all of whom had suffered the ravages of imperialism and colonialism, and who, in challenging the authority, provenance, and institutions of the science that represented them to Europe, were also understanding themselves as something more than what this science said they were.

The challenge to Orientalism, and the colonial era of which it is so organically a part, was a challenge to the muteness imposed upon the Orient as object. Insofar as it was a science of incorporation and inclusion by virtue of which the Orient was constituted and then introduced into Europe, Orientalism was a scientific movement whose analogue in the world of politics was the Orient’s colonial accumulation and acquisition by Europe. The Orient was, therefore, not Europe’s

interlocutor, but its silent Other. From roughly the end of the eighteenth century, when the Orient was re-discovered by Europe, its history had been a paradigm of antiquity and originality, functions that drew Europe's interests in acts of recognition or acknowledgement but *from* which Europe moved as its own industrial, economic and cultural development seemed to leave the Orient far behind. Oriental history – for Hegel, for Marx, later for Burkhardt, Nietzsche, Spengler and other major philosophers of history – was useful in portraying a region of great age, and what had to be left behind. Literary historians have further noted in all sorts of aesthetic writing and figurative portrayals that a trajectory of 'Westerling', found for example in Keats and Holderlin, customarily saw the Orient as ceding its historical preeminence and importance to the world spirit moving westwards away from Asia and towards Europe.

As primitivity, as the age-old antetype of Europe, as a fecund night out of which European rationality developed, the Orient's actuality receded inexorably into a kind of paradigmatic fossilisation. The origins of European anthropology and ethnography were constituted out of this radical difference, and, to my knowledge, as a discipline, anthropology has not yet dealt with this inherent political limitation upon its supposedly disinterested universality. This is one reason Johannes Fabian's book, *Time and The Other: how anthropology constitutes its object*, is both unique and important. Compared, say, with the standard disciplinary rationalisations and self-congratulatory clichés about hermeneutic circles offered by Clifford Geertz, Fabian's serious effort to re-direct anthropologists' attention back to the discrepancies in time, power and development between the ethnographer and his/her constituted object is all the more remarkable. In any event, what for the most part got left out of the discipline of Orientalism was the very history that resisted its ideological as well as political encroachments. That repressed or resistant history has now returned in the various critiques and attacks upon Orientalism, as a science of imperialism.

The divergences between the numerous critiques of Orientalism as ideology and praxis are very wide nonetheless. Some attack Orientalism as a prelude to assertions about the virtues of one or another native culture: these are the nativists. Others criticise Orientalism as a defence against attacks on one or another political creed: these are the nationalists. Still others criticise Orientalism for falsifying the nature of Islam: these are, *grosso modo*, the believers. I will not adjudicate between these claims, except to say that I have avoided taking stands on such matters as the real, true or authentic Islamic or Arab world. But, in common with all the recent critics of Orientalism, I think that two things are especially important – one, a methodological vigilance that construes Orientalism less as a positive than as a critical discipline and therefore makes it subject to intense scrutiny, and two, a determination

not to allow the segregation and confinement of the Orient to go on without challenge. My understanding of this second point has led me entirely to refuse designations like 'Orient' and 'Occident'.

Depending on how they construed their roles as Orientalists, critics of the critics of Orientalism have either reinforced the affirmations of positive power in Orientalism's discourse or, much less frequently alas, they have engaged Orientalism's critics in a genuine intellectual exchange. The reasons for this split are self-evident: some have to do with power and age, as well as institutional or guild defensiveness; others have to do with religious or ideological convictions. All are political – something that not everyone has found easy to acknowledge. If I may use my own example, when some of my critics agreed with the main premises of my argument, they still tended to fall back on encomia to the achievements of what Maxime Rodinson called 'la science orientaliste'. This self-serving view lent itself to attacks on an alleged Lysenkism lurking inside the polemics of Muslims or Arabs who lodged a protest with 'western' orientalism. This preposterous charge was made despite the fact that all the recent critics of Orientalism have been quite explicit about using such 'western' critiques as marxism or structuralism in an effort to override invidious distinctions between East and West, between Arab and western truth, and the like.

Sensitised to the outrageous attacks upon an august and formerly invulnerable science, many certified professionals whose division of study is the Arabs and Islam have disclaimed any politics at all, while vigorously pressing an ideologically intended counter-attack. I should mention a few of the more typical imputations made against me so that you can see Orientalism extending its nineteenth-century arguments to cover an incommensurate set of late twentieth-century eventualities. All of these derive from what to the nineteenth-century mind is the preposterous situation of an Oriental responding to Orientalism's asseverations. For unrestrained anti-intellectualism, unencumbered by critical self-consciousness, no one has quite achieved the sublime confidence of Bernard Lewis. His almost purely political exploits require more time to mention than they are worth. In a series of articles and one particularly weak book – *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* – Lewis has been busy responding to my argument, insisting that the western quest for knowledge about other societies is unique, that it is motivated by pure curiosity, and that, in contrast, Muslims were neither able nor interested in getting knowledge about Europe, as if knowledge about Europe was the only acceptable criterion for true knowledge. Lewis's arguments are presented as emanating exclusively from the scholar's apolitical impartiality, whereas he has become a widely rated authority for anti-Islamic, anti-Arab, Zionist and Cold War crusades, all of them underwritten by a zealotry covered with a veneer of urbanity that has very little in common with the 'science' and learning Lewis purports to be upholding.

Not quite as hypocritical, but no less uncritical, are younger ideologues and Orientalists like Daniel Pipes. His arguments, as demonstrated in his book *In the Path of God: Islam and political power*, would appear to be at the service not of knowledge but of an aggressive and interventionary state – the US – whose interests Pipes helps to define. Pipes speaks of Islam's anomie, its sense of inferiority, its defensiveness, as if Islam were one simple thing, and as if the quality of his either absent or impressionistic evidence were of the most secondary importance. His book testifies to Orientalism's unique resilience, its insulation from intellectual developments everywhere else in the culture, and its antediluvian imperiousness as it makes its assertions and affirmations with little regard for logic or argument. I doubt that any expert anywhere in the world would speak today of Judaism or Christianity with quite that combination of force and freedom that Pipes allows himself about Islam. One would also have thought that a book about Islamic revival would allude to parallel and related developments in styles of religious insurgency in, for example, Lebanon, Israel and the US. Nor is it likely that anyone anywhere, writing about material for which, in his own words, 'rumor, hearsay, and other wisps of evidence' are the only proof, will in the very same paragraph alchemically transmute rumour and hearsay into 'facts', on whose 'multitude' he relies in order 'to reduce the importance of each'. This is magic quite unworthy even of high Orientalism, and although Pipes pays his obeisance to imperialist Orientalism, he masters neither its genuine learning nor its pretence at disinterestedness. For Pipes, Islam is a volatile and dangerous business, a political movement intervening in and disrupting the West, stirring up insurrection and fanaticism everywhere else.

The core of Pipes's book is not simply its highly expedient sense of its own political relevance to Reagan's America, where terrorism and communism merge into the media's image of Muslim gunners, fanatics and rebels, but its thesis that Muslims themselves are the worst source for their own history. The pages of *In the Path of God* are dotted with references to Islam's incapacity for self-representation, self-understanding, self-consciousness, and with praise for witnesses like V.S. Naipaul who are so much more useful and clever in understanding Islam. Here, of course, is the most familiar of Orientalism's themes – they cannot represent themselves, they must therefore be represented by others who know more about Islam than Islam knows about itself. Now, it is often the case that you can be known by others in different ways than you know yourself, and that valuable insights might be generated accordingly. But that is quite a different thing than pronouncing it as immutable law that outsiders ipso facto have a better sense of you as an insider than you do of yourself. Note that there is no question of an *exchange* between Islam's views and an outsider's: no

dialogue, no discussion, no mutual recognition. There is a flat assertion of quality, which the western policy-maker, or his faithful servant, possesses by virtue of his being western, white, non-Muslim.

Now this, I submit, is neither science, nor knowledge, nor understanding: it is a statement of power and a claim for absolute authority. It is constituted out of racism, and it is made comparatively acceptable to an audience prepared in advance to listen to its muscular truths. Pipes speaks to and for a large clientele for whom Islam is not a culture, but a nuisance; most of Pipes's readers will, in their minds, associate what he says about Islam with the other nuisances of the 1960s and 1970s – blacks, women, post-colonial Third World nations that have tipped the balance against the US in such places as UNESCO and the UN, and for their pains have drawn forth the rebuke of Senator Moynihan and Mrs Kirkpatrick. In addition, Pipes – and the rows of like-minded Orientalists and experts he represents as their common denominator – stands for programmatic ignorance. Far from trying to understand Muslims in the context of imperialism and the revolt of an abused, but internally very diverse, segment of humanity, far from availing himself of the impressive recent works on Islam in different histories and societies, far from paying some attention to the immense advances in critical theory, in social science, in humanistic research and in the philosophy of interpretation, far from making some slight effort to acquaint himself with the vast imaginative literature in the Islamic world, Pipes obdurately and explicitly aligns himself with colonial Orientalists like Snouck Hurgronje and shamelessly pro-colonial renegades like V.S. Naipaul.

I have talked about Pipes only because he serves to make some points about Orientalism's large political setting, which is routinely denied and suppressed in the sort of claim proposed by its main spokesman, Bernard Lewis, who has the effrontery to disassociate Orientalism from its 200-year old partnership with European imperialism and associate it instead with modern classical philology and the study of ancient Greek and Roman culture. It is worth mentioning that this larger setting comprises two other elements, namely, the recent prominence of the Palestinian movement and the demonstrated resistance of Arabs in the United States and elsewhere against their portrayal in the public realm.

The question of Palestine and its fateful encounter with Zionism, on the one hand, and the guild of Orientalism, its professional caste-consciousness as a corporation of experts protecting their terrain and their credentials from outside scrutiny, on the other hand, together account for much of the animus against my critique of Orientalism. The ironies here are rich. Consider the case of one Orientalist who publicly attacked my book, he told me in a private letter, not because he disagreed with it – on the contrary, he felt that what I said was just – but because he had to defend the honour of his profession! Or, take the connection – explicitly made by two of the authors I cite in

Orientalism, Renan and Proust – between Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. Here, one would have expected many scholars and critics to have seen the conjuncture, that hostility to Islam in the modern Christian West has historically gone hand in hand with, has stemmed from the same source, has been nourished at the same stream as anti-Semitism, and that a critique of the orthodoxies, dogmas and disciplinary procedures of Orientalism contributes to an enlargement of our understanding of the cultural mechanisms of anti-Semitism. No such connection has ever been made by critics, who have seen in the critique of Orientalism an opportunity for them to defend Zionism, support Israel and launch attacks on Palestinian nationalism. The reasons for this confirm the history of Orientalism, for, as the Israeli commentator Dani Rubenstein has remarked, the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the destruction of Palestinian society and the sustained Zionist assault upon Palestinian nationalism have quite literally been led and staffed by Orientalists. Whereas in the past, it was European Christian Orientalists who supplied European culture with arguments for colonising and suppressing Islam, as well as for despising Jews, it is now the Jewish national movement that produces a cadre of colonial functionaries whose ideological theses about the Islamic or Arab mind are implemented in the administration of the Palestinian Arabs, an oppressed minority within the white-European-democracy that is Israel. Rubenstein notes with some sorrow that the Hebrew University's Islamic studies department has produced every one of the colonial officials and Arab experts who run the Occupied Territories.

Another irony should be mentioned in this regard: just as some Zionists have construed it as their duty to defend Orientalism against its critics, there has been a comic effort by some Arab nationalists to see the Orientalist controversy as an imperialist plot to enhance American control over the Arab world. According to this implausible scenario, the critics of Orientalism are not anti-imperialists at all, but covert agents of imperialism. The logical conclusion from this is that the best way to attack imperialism is not to say anything critical about it. At this point, I concede that we have left reality for a world of illogic and derangement.

Underlying much of the discussion of Orientalism is a disquieting realisation that the relationship between cultures is both uneven and irremediably secular. This brings us to the point I alluded to a moment ago, about recent Arab and Islamic efforts, well-intentioned for the most part, but sometimes motivated by unpopular regimes, who, in drawing attention to the shoddiness of the western media in representing the Arabs or Islam, divert scrutiny from the abuses of their rule. Parallel developments have been occurring in UNESCO, where the controversy surrounding the world information order – and proposals for its reform by various Third World and socialist governments – has

taken on the dimensions of a major international issue. Most of these disputes testify, first, to the fact that the production of knowledge, or information, of media images, is unevenly distributed: its main centres are located in what, on both sides of the divide, has been polemically called the metropolitan West. Second, this unhappy realisation, on the part of weaker parties and cultures, has reinforced their grasp of the fact that, although there are many divisions within it, there is only one secular and historical world, and that neither nativism, nor divine intervention, nor regionalism, nor ideological smokescreens can hide societies, cultures and peoples from each other, especially not from those with the force and will to penetrate others for political as well as economic ends. But, third, many of these disadvantaged post-colonial states and their loyalist intellectuals have, in my opinion, drawn the wrong conclusions, which are that one must either attempt to impose control upon the production of knowledge at the source, or, in the worldwide media market, attempt to improve, enhance, ameliorate the images currently in circulation without doing anything to change the political situation from which they emanate and by which they are sustained.

The failings of these approaches are obvious: one need not belabour such matters as the squandering of immense amounts of petro-dollars for short-lived public relations scams, or the increasing repression, human-rights abuses, outright gangsterism that has taken place in many Third World countries, all of them occurring in the name of national security, and occasionally of fighting neo-imperialism. What I do want to talk about is the much larger question of what is to be done, and how we can speak of intellectual work that isn't merely reactive or negative.

One of the legacies of Orientalism, and indeed one of its epistemological foundations, is historicism, that is, the view propounded by Vico, Hegel, Marx, Ranke, Dilthey and others, that if humankind has a history, it is produced by men and women, and can be understood historically, at given epochs or moments, as possessing a complex, but coherent unity. So far as Orientalism in particular and the European knowledge of other societies in general have been concerned, historicism meant that the one human history uniting humanity either culminated in or was observed from the vantage point of Europe, or the West. What was neither observed by Europe nor documented by it was, therefore, 'lost' until, at some later date, it too could be incorporated by the new sciences of anthropology, political economics and linguistics. It is out of this later recuperation of what Eric Wolf has called people without history, that a still later disciplinary step was taken: the founding of the science of world history, whose major practitioners include Braudel, Wallerstein, Perry Anderson and Wolf himself.

But along with the greater capacity for dealing with – in Ernst Bloch's phrase – the non-synchronous experiences of Europe's Other,

has gone a fairly uniform avoidance of the relationship between European imperialism and these variously constituted and articulated knowledges. What has never taken place is an epistemological critique of the connection between the development of a historicism which has expanded and developed enough to include antithetical attitudes such as ideologies of western imperialism and critiques of imperialism, on the one hand, and, on the other, the actual practice of imperialism by which the accumulation of territories and population, the control of economies and the incorporation and homogenisation of histories are maintained. If we keep this in mind, we will remark, for example, that in the methodological assumptions and practice of world history – which is ideologically anti-imperialist – little or no attention is given to those cultural practices, like Orientalism or ethnography, affiliated with imperialism, which in genealogical fact fathered world history itself. Hence, the emphasis in world history as a discipline has been on economic and political practices, defined by the processes of world historical writing, as in a sense separate and different from, as well as unaffected by, the knowledge of them which world history produces. The curious result is that the theories of accumulation on a world scale, or the capitalist world system, or lineages of absolutism (a) depend on the same percipient and historicist observer who had been an Orientalist or colonial traveller three generations ago; (b) they depend also on a homogenising and incorporating world historical scheme that assimilated non-synchronous developments, histories, cultures and peoples to it; and (c) they block and suppress latent epistemological critiques of the institutional, cultural and disciplinary instruments linking the incorporative practice of world history with, on one hand, partial knowledges like Orientalism, and on the other, with continued ‘western’ hegemony of the non-European, ‘peripheral’ world.

The problem is once again historicism and the universalising and self-validating that has been endemic to it. Bryan Turner’s important little book, *Marx and The End of Orientalism*, went a great distance towards fragmenting, dissociating, dislocating and decentring the experiential terrain covered at present by universalising historicism. What he suggests, in discussing the epistemological dilemma, is the need to go beyond the polarities and binary oppositions of marxist-historicist thought (voluntarisms v. determinism, Asiatic v. western society, change v. stasis) in order to create a new type of analysis of plural, as opposed to single, objects. Similarly, in a series of studies produced in interrelated and frequently unrelated fields, there has been a general advance in the process of breaking up, dissolving and methodologically as well as critically re-conceiving the unitary field ruled hitherto by Orientalism, historicism and what could be called essentialist universalism.

I shall give examples of this dissolving and decentring process in a moment. What needs to be said about it immediately is that it is neither

purely methodological nor purely reactive in intent. You do not respond, for example, to the tyrannical conjuncture of colonial power with scholarly Orientalism simply by proposing an alliance between nativist sentiment buttressed by some variety of native ideology to combat them. This, for example, has been the trap into which many Third World and anti-imperialist activists fell in supporting the Iranian and Palestinian struggles, and who found themselves either with nothing to say about the abominations of Khomeini's regime or resorting, in the Palestine case, to the time-worn clichés of revolutionism and reactionary armed-strugglism after the Lebanese debacle. Nor can it be a matter simply of re-cycling the old marxist or world-historical rhetoric, whose dubious accomplishment is merely the re-establishment of the intellectual and theoretical ascendancy of the old, by now impertinent and genealogically flawed, conceptual models. No: we must, I believe, think both in political and theoretical terms, locating the main problems in what Frankfurt theory identified as domination and division of labour. We must confront also the problem of the absence of a theoretical, utopian and libertarian dimension in analysis. We cannot proceed unless we dissipate and re-dispose the material of historicism into radically different pursuits of knowledge, and we cannot do that until we are aware that no new projects of knowledge can be constituted unless they resist the dominance and professionalised particularism of historicist systems and reductive, pragmatic or functionalist theories.

These goals are less difficult than my description sounds. For the reconsideration of Orientalism has been intimately connected with many other activities of the sort I referred to earlier, and which it now becomes imperative to articulate in more detail. Thus, we can now see that Orientalism is a praxis of the same sort as male gender dominance, or patriarchy, in metropolitan societies: the Orient was routinely described as feminine, its riches as fertile, its main symbols the sensual woman, the harem and the despotic – but curiously attractive – ruler. Moreover, Orientals, like housewives, were confined to silence and to unlimited enriching production. Much of this material is manifestly connected to the configurations of sexual, racial and political asymmetry underlying mainstream modern western culture, as illuminated respectively by feminists, by black studies critics and by anti-imperialist activists. To read, for example, Sandra Gilbert's brilliant recent study of Rider Haggard's *She* is to perceive the narrow correspondence between suppressed Victorian sexuality at home, its fantasies abroad and the tightening hold on the nineteenth-century male imagination of imperialist ideology. Similarly, a work like Abdul Jan Mohammed's *Manichean Aesthetics* investigates the parallel, but unremittingly separate artistic worlds of white and black fictions of the same place, Africa, suggesting that even in imaginative literature a rigid ideological system operates beneath a freer surface. Or in a study like

Peter Gran's *The Islamic Roots of Capitalism*, which is written out of an anti-imperialist and anti-Orientalist, meticulously researched and scrupulously concrete historical stance, one can begin to sense what a vast invisible terrain of human effort and ingenuity lies beneath the frozen Orientalist surface formerly carpeted by the discourse of Islamic or Oriental economic history.

There are many more examples of analyses and theoretical projects undertaken out of similar impulses as those fuelling the anti-Orientalist critique. All of them are interventionary in nature, that is, they self-consciously situate themselves at vulnerable conjunctural nodes of ongoing disciplinary discourses where each of them posits nothing less than new objects of knowledge, new praxes of humanist activity, new theoretical models that upset or, at the very least, radically alter the prevailing paradigmatic norms. One might list here such disparate efforts as Linda Nochlin's explorations of nineteenth-century Orientalist ideology as working within major art-historical contexts; Hanna Batatu's immense re-structuring of the terrain of the modern Arab state's political behaviour; Raymond Williams's sustained examination of structures of feeling, communities of knowledge, emergent or alternative cultures, patterns of geographical thought (as in his remarkable *The Country and The City*); Talal Asad's account of anthropological self-capture in the work of major theorists, and his own studies in the field; Eric Hobsbawm's new formulation of 'the invention of tradition' or invented practices studied by historians as a crucial index both of the historian's craft and, more important, of the invention of new emergent nations; the work produced in re-examination of Japanese, Indian and Chinese culture by scholars like Masao Miyoshi, Eqbal Ahmad, Tariq Ali, A. Sivanandan, Romila Thapar, the group around Ranajit Guha (*Subaltern Studies*), Gayatri Spivak, and younger scholars like Homi Bhabha and Partha Mitter; the freshly imaginative reconsideration by Arab literary critics - the *Fusoul* and *Mawakif* groups, Elias Khouri, Kamal Abu Deeb, Mohammad Bannis, and others - seeking to redefine and invigorate the reified classical structures of Arabic literary tradition, and, as a parallel to that, the imaginative works of Juan Goytisolo and Salman Rushdie, whose fictions and criticism are self-consciously written against the cultural stereotypes and representations commanding the field. It is worth mentioning here, too, the pioneering efforts of the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, and the fact that twice recently, in their presidential addresses, an American Sinologist (Benjamin Schwartz) and Indologist (Ainslee Embree) have reflected seriously upon what the critique of Orientalism means for their fields, a public reflection as yet denied Middle Eastern scholars. Perennially, there is the work carried out by Noam Chomsky in political and historical fields, an example of independent radicalism and uncompromising severity unequalled by anyone else today; or in literary

theory, the powerful theoretical articulations of a social, in the widest and deepest sense, model for narrative put forward by Fredric Jameson; Richard Ohmann's empirically arrived-at definitions of canon privilege and institution in his recent work; revisionary Emersonian perspectives formulated in the critique of contemporary technological and imaginative, as well as cultural ideologies by Richard Poirier; and the decentring, redistributive ratios of intensity and drive studied by Leo Bersani.

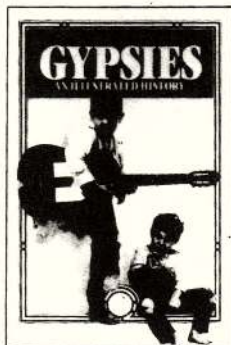
In conclusion, I should try to draw them together into a common endeavour which can inform the larger enterprise of which the critique of Orientalism is a part. First, we note a plurality of audiences and constituencies; none of the works and workers I have cited claims to be working on behalf of One audience which is the only one that counts, or for one supervening, overcoming Truth, a truth allied to western (or for that matter eastern) reason, objectivity, science. On the contrary, we note here a plurality of terrains, multiple experiences and different constituencies, each with its admitted (as opposed to denied) interest, political desiderata, disciplinary goals. All these efforts work out of what might be called a decentred consciousness, not less reflective and critical for being decentred, for the most part non- and in some cases anti-totalising and anti-systematic. The result is that instead of seeking common unity by appeals to a centre of sovereign authority, methodological consistency, canonicity and science, they offer the possibility of common grounds of assembly between them. They are, therefore, planes of activity and praxis, rather than one topography commanded by a geographical and historical vision locatable in a known centre of metropolitan power. Second, these activities and praxes are consciously secular, marginal and oppositional with reference to the mainstream, generally authoritarian systems against which they now agitate. Third, they are political and practical in as much as they intend – without necessarily succeeding – the end of dominating, coercive systems of knowledge. I do not think it too much to say that the political meaning of analysis, as carried out in all these fields, is uniformly and programmatically libertarian by virtue of the fact that, unlike Orientalism, it is not based on the finality and closure of antiquarian or curatorial knowledge, but on investigative open analysis, even though it might seem that analyses of this sort – frequently difficult and abstruse – are in the final count paradoxically quietistic. We must remember the lesson provided by Adorno's negative dialectics, and regard analysis as in the fullest sense being *against* the grain, deconstructive, utopian.

But there remains the one problem haunting all intense, self-convicted and local intellectual work, the problem of the division of labour, which is a necessary consequence of that reification and commodification first and most powerfully analysed in this century by Georg Lukacs. This is the problem, sensitively and intelligently put by

Myra Jehlen for women's studies, whether, in identifying and working through anti-dominant critiques, subaltern groups – women, blacks, and so on – can resolve the dilemma of autonomous fields of experience and knowledge that are created as a consequence. A double kind of possessive exclusivism could set in: the sense of being an excluding insider by virtue of experience (only women can write for and about women, and only literature that treats women or Orientals well is good literature), and second, being an excluding insider by virtue of method (only marxists, anti-orientalists, feminists can write about economics, Orientalism, women's literature).

This is where we are at now, at the threshold of fragmentation and specialisation, which impose their own parochial dominations and fussy defensiveness, or on the verge of some grand synthesis which I, for one, believe could very easily wipe out both the gains and the oppositional consciousness provided by these counter-knowledges hitherto. Several possibilities propose themselves; I shall conclude simply by listing them. A need for greater crossing of boundaries, for greater interventionism in cross-disciplinary activity, a concentrated awareness of the situation – political, methodological, social, historical – in which intellectual and cultural work is carried out. A clarified political and methodological commitment to the dismantling of systems of domination which since they are collectively maintained must, to adopt and transform some of Gramsci's phrases, be collectively fought, by mutual siege, war of manoeuvre *and* war of position. Lastly, a much sharpened sense of the intellectual's role both in the defining of a context and in changing it, for without that, I believe, the critique of Orientalism is simply an ephemeral pastime.

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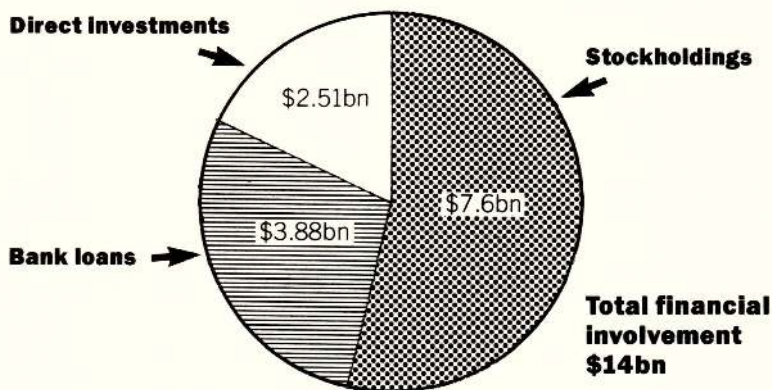
The political economy of apartheid and the strategic stakes of imperialism

The extraordinary uprisings in South Africa have focused attention not only on the brutality of the apartheid system but also on the economic role of the US in that country. By any yardstick, US financial involvement is staggering: \$2.5 billion worth of direct investment, \$3.9 billion worth of bank loans, \$7.6 billion worth of shares in South African companies, and US exports to South Africa in 1983 totalling \$2 billion (see Chart A). Total foreign investment by the West in South Africa now stands at about \$25 billion.

Can anyone seriously believe that investors are unmindful of the pass system and torture chambers in South Africa? More incredible, can anyone seriously believe that the US and western imperialists have pumped billions of dollars of capital into that country, have shared nuclear technology with it, and licensed the production of weapons systems by the South African defence industry in order to create the economic foundations for a just social order? But wait, just as one is about to vomit up the last morsel of credulity, along come 'critics' to indict the US for 'legitimising' and 'lending its prestige' to apartheid. Prestige? Unintentionally, they've got a point: the 'prestige' of the million and more murdered by US imperialism in Indochina; the 'prestige' of the torture squads it trains in Latin America; the 'prestige' of Union Carbide in India. Legitimise? Lest we forget, as recently as 1967, racial intermarriage was a crime in Virginia. And today the infant

Raymond Lotta is a marxist-leninist political economist who resides in the US. Among his latest works is *America in Decline* (Chicago, Banner Press, 1984).

Race & Class, XXVII, 2 (1985)

Chart A: *US financial involvement in South Africa, 1982*

Sources: *Survey of Current Business*, United States Federal Reserve Bank; *Nation* (3-10 September 1983)

mortality rate for Blacks in parts of Chicago and the Bronx has more in common with thirty Third World countries than with the rest of the United States. US imperialism and apartheid deserve each other – indeed, they require each other.

Apartheid and capital accumulation

South Africa in perspective

The apartheid system has its origins in a particular form of settler colonialism and has its logic in the capitalist mode of production. Capitalism in South Africa has developed in a very specific context: it has utilised and transformed the rural African economy and has developed under the protective umbrella of, and in close conjunction with, imperialist capital. Like the European settlers in the United States, the white settlers in South Africa sought to subjugate the indigenous peoples. But while the whites in North America exterminated the better part of the Native American population, the whites in South Africa did not wipe out the African peoples. These Europeans were and have remained a small ruling minority. With the discovery of diamonds in the mid-nineteenth century, and later gold, the demand for cheap labour stimulated the large-scale and despotic employment of blacks in the mines. The profits generated by the mining industry laid the basis for subsequent capitalist development and the emergence of a South African capitalist class.

Like Israel, South Africa is a strategic battlement – a regional settler-type gendarme for western imperialism. But whereas the Israeli

economy lacks practically any independent economic viability – it is largely a military machine dependent on external assistance – South Africa has developed a modern capitalist sector. Yet while the industrial base of the South African economy is similar in many respects to that of developed capitalist countries, and while the white workers enjoy living standards that are comparable with those of European and North American workers, the specific dynamics of capitalist development and the structural division of the working class in South Africa condemn the vast majority of the population to the grinding impoverishment that characterises the Third World. At the heart of these particularities is apartheid – the systematic superexploitation, oppression and enslavement of the majority of the indigenous population.

A system of racial segregation has long evolved in South Africa, codified in a body of law dating back to 1913, which has two objectives: to preserve the white monopoly on political power and to provide a reservoir of cheap and coercible labour for industry and agriculture. To these twin ends, the country has been divided territorially. The Land Acts have allotted about 13 per cent of the country as ‘reserves’ or ‘homelands’ for the African majority. But these densely populated and impoverished homelands were never intended to sustain the majority of the population. Only by working outside these areas under a migrant labour system – administered by labour bureaux which assign workers to specific industries or employers – can the Africans earn enough to provide for themselves and their families. Subsequent legislation has regulated the flow of black labour into the mines and industrial regions: when their contracts are fulfilled, the miners can be sent back to the reserves; male workers are discouraged from bringing their families with them (many are housed in carefully segregated and police-controlled areas); and, of course, there is the pass system. Such influx restrictions have not prevented the growth of an urban African underclass. But the territorial principle of segregation has been utilised effectively to deprive blacks of the most minimal civil and political rights. In fact, any African residing in a city, for whatever length of time and even if born there, remains officially an alien.

It is often suggested that South Africa is a society in which ideology has run amok. In other words, the racial restrictions and prohibitions are out of step with the requirements of modern industrial growth. Or it is sometimes argued that the very imperatives of capitalist industrialisation will gobble up apartheid. Such arguments overlook one overarching fact: the extraordinary growth of the South African economy in the post-war period not only rested on apartheid but reinforced it. The lives of black people are incomparably worse, the terror they face never more pervasive. Have the practices of US corporations mitigated any of this? As we shall see, they are accomplices, the more criminal for their honeyed and pious words; and, at this stage of crisis, they play an all-

important role in preventing the regime from collapsing. The authoritarian conscription of and discrimination against black labour have yielded average rates of return that rank among the highest in the world available to western capital since the end of the Second World War. The modalities of superexploitation are the real issue lurking beneath the rhetoric and lies.

The benchmark according to which wages are paid is the labourer's necessary consumption fund, that is, the cost of sustaining and reproducing his or her labour power and rearing a new generation of proletarians. Yet, under specific historical circumstances, it becomes possible to pay labour power below its value, not only for a time and exceptionally but ordinarily and as a rule. Such superexploitation is a predicate of imperialist rule in the colonies and neo-colonies.

To see this, one only has to look at the superexploited labour that can be found in the assembly plants set up by US companies on the Mexican side of the US-Mexican border, in the export-processing zones of Asia, on the agricultural plantations in Latin America and in South Africa. What are some of the defining characteristics of the labour process under conditions of superexploitation? First, lower wages, substantially longer working hours and a significantly higher intensity of work per hour (people work harder) than prevail for comparable activities in the advanced countries. Second, part of the costs of sustaining and reproducing this capitalist wage labour is often borne by pre- or non-capitalist relations of production, such as the 'informal' economy of the cities (or shantytowns) and, especially, the rural sectors, where the 'household' labour of women plays a pivotal role. Third, the workforce is often subject to extreme extra-economic coercion – be it the hired thugs of *latifundistas*, tightly controlled labour compounds or repressive legislation – which enhances the appropriation of surplus value. It must be emphasised that these are not residual features of the labour process but elements that profoundly condition the profitability of capital in the world today.

Apartheid as a form of superexploitation

Table 1, based on official South African government statistics, shows the extreme disparity between the wages of blacks and whites in South Africa. What, then, is the economic and social basis of cheap migrant labour in the South African economy? In part, it is the administrative control of wage levels, which results in a totally different and lower wage structure for blacks. In part, it is the pressure on the migrant worker: he or she has limited time to find a job and if fired may never secure gainful employment in the cities again. In part, it is legislation that up until recently forbade unionisation among blacks. But all of this interacts with, and is directly linked to, the specific framework of the production and reproduction of labour power. The migrant labourer in South

Table 1: *Numbers employed and average monthly wages (\$) in South Africa, 3rd quarter 1984*

<i>Mining</i>		
African	636,722	346
White	75,238	1,772
Coloured	9,090	549
Indian	673	888
<i>Manufacturing</i>		
African	749,000	429
White	312,600	1,677
Coloured	245,300	486
Indian	88,600	604

Source: Republic of South Africa, *Central Statistical Services*

Africa has access to means of subsistence outside the capitalist sector. More specifically, the indigenous system of peasant production has been transformed into a cheap reservoir of labour reproduction.

The extended family in the reserves – by caring for the very young and very old, the sick, and the labourer during times of rest, by providing education (for which Africans must pay) for the young – relieves the capitalist sector and the state of some of the expense of carrying out and paying for these functions. Thus, *the relationship between wages and the cost of production and reproduction of labour power changes: the worker can be paid below the value of labour power.*¹ At the same time, the reserves furnish capital with an optimal selection of workers to replenish a brutally driven and rapidly exhausted labour force (labour turnover has been quite high in South African industry, and the life expectancy for black men is 55 years). The household and subsistence labour of women on the reserves is an important pillar of this subsidy to capital.

In 1981, 1.3 million blacks from the bantustans were working in white areas as migrant labourers under contract. An additional 745,000 were commuting from the bantustans on a daily basis. This arrangement presumes a certain level of production in the reserves. Enough must be produced as a necessary supplement to wages so that the subsistence requirement of the migrants and their families can be met, but not so much as to lessen migratory pressure to seek out work. The system known as influx control sees to the expulsion of rural blacks who try to find urban employment without coming through the officially designated channels.

Two fundamental features of the cheap labour system now come into focus: the tight control exercised over the movement and residence of

the black labour force, and the preservation of forms of subsistence economy in the reserves, which enables capital to assess black living standards at a lower level than white. In point of fact, the family holdings in the reserves are grossly inadequate. The growing squalor has produced a tidal flow out of the reserves. The economic planners have responded in part by dispersing industrial development to new 'growth points' away from the existing industrial centres and closer to rural blacks whose job hunger has steadily worsened. Blacks from the reserves who do find urban employment can be authorised to live in the townships like Soweto, which is outside of Johannesburg. In these overcrowded townships, single men may live in state-owned barracks – the continuing construction of these so-called hostels is an indication of the regime's commitment to the migrancy system. The state subsidises substandard housing, while other costs of sustaining the workforce are thrown back on to the reserves.

Since 1960, the South African government has removed 3,500,000 Africans, Coloured and Indians from white to designated areas. At least one million more Africans have been forcibly relocated within the bantustans. A further 1,700,000 people are under threat of removal. All Africans over the age of 16 are required to be fingerprinted and carry a pass book at all times. A series of laws outlaws public gatherings and resistance organisations and provides for indefinite detention without trial and random police searches. South Africa has the highest per capita prison population in the world, and of the 130 people hanged in 1980, only one was white.²

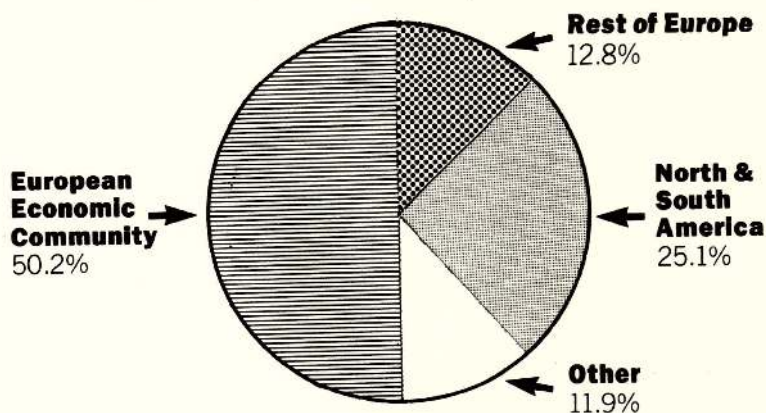
The racial restrictions and the official violence rest on a definite economic foundation. The contradictions within this foundation and the increasingly mass and organised resistance to apartheid have jolted a system that many thought was impregnable. The declining productive capacity of the reserves has contributed to upward pressure on wages and accelerated the urbanisation process. Struggles have erupted against rural impoverishment and urban control. And the youth, particularly in the townships, have played a vanguard role in defying authority at every level and in every sphere of society. But why the stakes are so high only becomes clear when the apartheid system is seen in larger global perspective.

Apartheid and imperialist expansion since 1945

By the 1970s, multinationals provided about 40 per cent of all capital invested in South Africa's manufacturing sector. In 1982, foreign direct investment represented almost 16 per cent of the domestic capital stock and an additional 20 per cent of the capital stock was held by foreign capital in the form of portfolio investment. One-third of the growth in the domestic product over the past two decades has been attributed to

foreign capital. In 1983, the value of US direct investment was put at \$2.2 billion. America accounts for about 20 per cent of total foreign direct investment, trailing behind both Britain and West Germany (see Chart B). But it is strong in the growth and technologically advanced sectors: it controls about 40 per cent of the oil market, 33 per cent of the car market and 70 per cent of the computer market.³ The big surge in multinational manufacturing investments came in the 1960s and 1970s. Two British banks, Barclays and Standard, are the largest foreign banks operating in South Africa – their domestic affiliates controlled about half of the assets of the twenty largest South African banks. But by the 1970s, the US Citibank had emerged as the fourth largest foreign bank in South Africa.

Chart B: Foreign investment in South Africa (1983)



Source: *The Economist* (30 March 1985)

The foreign banks have played a critical role in channelling international and domestic capital into South Africa's 'growth machine', and have mobilised international credits for the apartheid regime during its most perilous moments. Furthermore, given South Africa's position as the world's preeminent gold producer, the banks have also been major actors in South Africa's international gold dealings.⁴

A few observations can immediately be made about the scope and character of foreign investment in South Africa. To begin with, South Africa has been a major outlet for investible capital in the post-war period. Fully one-third of US direct investment in Africa is concentrated in South Africa. Second, these investments have been highly profitable (See Tables 4 and 5). Third, these investments are marked by a high degree of collaboration with South African capital, both local banks and firms like Anglo-American (which is itself a transnational corporation) and by considerable interpenetration between units of

foreign capital. Fourth, these investments have had from the outset an important strategic dimension, linked to the expansion and defence of the western alliance. And, finally, the US, though not the dominant investor, has emerged as the imperialist chieftain in South Africa.

Laying the foundations

In viewing developments in the South African economy since the end of the Second World War, it is possible to discern three distinct periods. The first, dating from the accession to government of the Nationalist Party in 1948 to the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960, is marked by the systematic elaboration and enforcement of a system of racial segregation suited to the requirements of modern capitalist growth, and the provision of the necessary infrastructure and heavy industrial investment to spur capitalist expansion. The second period, dating from the aftermath of Sharpeville up to Soweto in 1975-6, is the period of the South African 'miracle'. Organised resistance to apartheid was temporarily drowned in blood and the instruments of repression perfected further, foreign capital flowed massively into the country and capital-intensive industrial development saw the increasing interpenetration of different capitalist sectors. South Africa's rate of growth in the 1960s was exceeded only by that of Japan. The third period, dating from the mid- to late-1970s up till the present, is marked by the economic contradictions and social conflict generated by the structural conditions of cheap wage labour – all interpenetrated by the world economic crisis and the mounting tension between the US- and Soviet-led blocs, rivalry which has found sharp expression in southern Africa.

The US and the West in general needed South Africa both as a strategic outpost and regional gendarme. And the country's settler population and previous history provided the framework for this. In the beginning, the British managed to continue holding the baton in South Africa. But, in doing so, they paid much of the political cost of western domination and took most of the flak of anti-apartheid struggle and sentiment within and outside of South Africa. Meanwhile, the US manoeuvred to take advantage of the fact that South Africa was more than a rampart for the West: it was a highly lucrative one. In general, the US was slow to wrest overt political control from the West Europeans in Africa. But it moved with great dispatch to monopolise sources of raw materials. By the early 1960s, the British were no longer able to provide the kind of shield necessary for western and, particularly, for US penetration into South Africa. Yet, by this time, the US was able to use its economic reserves to re-fortify the imperialist hold over South Africa but now under clear US leadership.

The immediate post-war years in South Africa saw a boom based largely on developments within gold and uranium and in which the British were the principal beneficiaries. More important, the 1950s set

the basic patterns for South Africa's economic development. The migrant labour system of cheap African labour, and its superstructural overlay, were put in place. And on this basis, a series of initiatives was taken to encourage and facilitate investment in manufacturing. Central to the process was the role of state planning and state investment. Targets for annual production were set and a highly integrated network of state corporations created a modern industrial infrastructure, with large-scale investments in iron and steel, power generation, oils and petrochemicals, and railway and harbour development. From the beginning, this 'parastatal' structure was heavily penetrated by foreign capital, particularly loan capital and principally from official lending institutions. In 1951, a consortium of US banks extended a \$10 million credit to the railways and \$30 million to the state electrical utility. The World Bank loaned South Africa some \$200 million in the 1950s for similar endeavours. The purpose of these loans and public capital outlays was to induce investment by providing low-cost industrial and infrastructural inputs. The imposition of apartheid would provide low-cost labour.

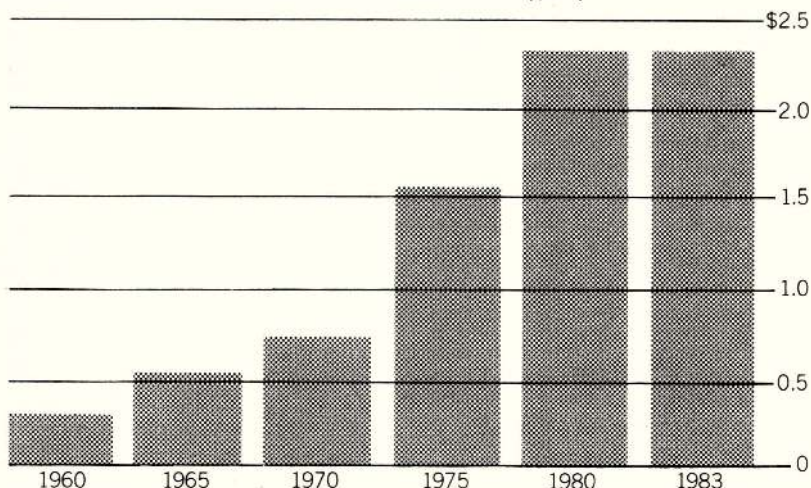
The South African 'miracle' of the 1960s and early 1970s was appropriately inaugurated by Sharpeville. Fittingly, a year before Sharpeville, Chase and Citibank led a consortium which extended \$40 million of revolving credits to the regime; while in the immediate wake of the bloodbath, Chase made a much-publicised loan of \$10 million, and soon joined a consortium to lend the regime \$150 million. American bankers saw the chance to get on the 'inside track' and push the British into a subordinate position. What followed was an incredible inflow of foreign capital. Substantial American and Canadian investments went into the mining and processing of South Africa's non-gold minerals. At the same time, American and European capital entered the high-growth, capital-intensive and technologically advanced sectors, including chemicals, electrical machinery, cars and computers. In general, US investments in South Africa have been more concentrated in manufacturing than those of Britain, and have more often taken the form of direct ownership and overt control, although for political and economic reasons this has changed recently (see Chart C).

Foreign capital has thus played the critical role in the development and configuration of the South African economy. It has not only pushed forward the strategic and technologically sophisticated sectors but also provided the linkages between manufacturing, mining and agriculture. Moreover, the repressive capabilities of the regime are very much a function of foreign capital. As a UN-commissioned study pointed out in 1979:

A crucial element in the South African minority regime's military planning is the expanded capacity to transport military equipment and personnel rapidly at low cost over widespread geographical

areas. Large bodies of the limited numbers of white troops need to be able to shift rapidly from one potential trouble spot to another. Transnational corporate investment ... has helped build up the most modern transport industry on the continent.⁵

Chart C: *US direct investment in South Africa (\$bn)*



Source: US Department of Commerce, *Survey of Current Business*, various issues

In addition, the sheer magnitude of foreign investment, including timely loans, has cushioned the regime, freeing resources for an awesome military machine (ARMSCOR, the public-sector arms manufacturer, is now the third largest corporation in South Africa). To sum up, foreign capital, 'sometimes in competition, sometimes in consortia, collaborated with the parastatals and mining finance houses to mold South Africa into an increasingly dominant regional subcenter.'⁶

By now the reader should have some sense of the western bloc's enormous economic role in South Africa. But the implications for imperialist accumulation deserve fuller examination. International capital has, on the one hand, been able to tap South Africa's mineral resources profitably, and, on the other, been able to sustain high rates of return in capital-intense sectors and operations in that country. South Africa has figured prominently in the post-war expansion of western capital.

The minerals connection

Table 2 highlights South Africa's share of the total world reserves of selected minerals. Southern Africa is a veritable storehouse of strategic metals. Consider the case of chromium (sometimes called chrome). It is used to harden steel, and mixtures of chromium are used in armour-

Table 2: *South Africa's reserves of selected minerals*

<i>Mineral commodity</i>	<i>% of world reserves</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Manganese ore	81	1
Platinum group metals	72	1
Gold	49	1
Chrome ore	58	1
Vanadium	29	2
Andalusite, sillimanite	38	1
Fluorspar	34	1
Vermiculite	28	2
Diamond	22	2
Uranium	16*	2
Zirconium	11	2
Coal	10	2
Phosphate	9	3
Antimony	7	3

Source: *Republic of South Africa Yearbook, 1984*

*excluding COMECON countries

Table 3: *US import dependency, selected critical metals (1984)*

	<i>Net import reliance (imports as % of total US consumption)</i>	<i>Share of imports from South Africa, % of total imports (rank as supplier)</i>
Antimony	54 (1983)	ores and concentrate – 8 (4) oxide – 40 (1)
Chromium	82	55 (1)
Manganese	99	ore – 31 (1) ferromanganese – 39 (1)
Platinum	91	49 (1)
Vanadium	41	44 (1)

Source: Estimates from US Bureau of Mines, *Mineral Commodity Summaries, 1985*

plate for ships, tanks, safes and the cutting edges of high-speed machine tools. The average jet engine contains 5,000 pounds of the metal. Europe and Japan have no domestic sources of chromium, and US import reliance amounts to over 80 per cent of domestic consumption. Table 3 shows what percentage of total US consumption of chromium and four other strategic metals is met by imports from South Africa. The numbers speak for themselves.

But import dependency is not the only issue here. Fabulous profits have been reaped in the mining, smelting and refining of these resources. From the 1960s to the mid-1970s, US investments in mining and smelting grew rapidly. In the 1968-73 period, this investment grew at an annual rate of 15 per cent, compared to 5 per cent for the rest of Africa. Table 4 provides some explanation for the robustness of this growth in the expansionary phase of the post-war spiral. Rates of return ranged between 20 and 43 per cent over a twenty-year period. In the mid-1970s, Union Carbide opened a chrome refinery in South Africa. In 1976, all but about 10 per cent of Union Carbide's African workers earned less than a minimum health and decent living standard for a typical South African family. In 1976, mineworkers in the US were earning on average almost six times the average wage of black workers employed by Union Carbide in South Africa.⁷

Table 4: *Raw materials and the post-war boom:*
rate of return on total book value, US firms' direct
foreign investment in mining and smelting, 1953-72 (%)

	Canada	Latin America and the Caribbean	South Africa
1953-57	8.3	10.4	25.7
1958-62	5.9	14.5	20.8
1963-67	9.9	19.9	43.3
1968-72	5.3	12.8	31.6

Source: US Department of Commerce, *Survey of Current Business*, various issues

Capital is always eager to exploit cost advantages. And in the post-war period, the increased demand for raw materials, given the exhaustion of domestic supplies and new industrial requirements, heightened the search for mineral resources, while advances in international transport rendered overseas investment even more profitable. On the foundation of superexploitation, it was possible for a time to obtain high profits from such raw materials investments *and* to pass on benefits in the form of lower input costs to other capitals using these

materials. Furthermore, one of the specific features of the post-war alliance erected on the ashes of the Second World War is its highly integrated economic character. Thus, West Germany and Japan, both heavily dependent on imported raw materials, oriented economic development to a new spatial configuration of capital that included, importantly, wider access to Third World raw materials (Japan obtains well over 50 per cent of its chrome from South Africa). Cheap raw materials were an essential ingredient of the post-war boom. The story is etched, in part, deep in the veins of the South African mines, if not in the veins of the black mine labourers.

Profiting from apartheid

The systematic depression of black living standards, as part of a system of coerced wage labour, has direct and indirect effects on profitability in a way that is perhaps clearest in the manufacturing sector, where the US has the bulk of its investments. Certainly, manufacturing capital has sought to avail itself of low wages, a factor of obvious importance to labour-intensive operations. But firms and sectors marked by sophisticated technologies and capital-intensive machinery and equipment also derive important benefits from cheap black labour (even when they do not directly employ it). The state corporations have sold basic inputs to foreign enterprise at or below cost. ISCOR, the state steel corporation, has sold cold rolled steel at 25 per cent below British prices. And low wages for black workers employed in the iron and steel industry are a major reason it has been possible to hold prices down or keep them at internationally competitive levels: the average monthly wages of black workers in 1976 were less than a quarter of those of whites employed in the industry. ESCOM, the state electricity corporation, has charged lower rates to industry and mining than to private consumers. Here, too, low wages to African employees have been a significant factor. In 1982, blacks in the construction industry earned, on an average monthly basis, 18 per cent of what whites in the industry did; in the electricity industry, blacks earned 27 per cent of what whites did.⁸ Interestingly, both ISCOR and ESCOM received substantial loans from American banks in the 1970s.

Thus, even where individual firms employ a largely skilled white labour force (receiving relatively high wages) or where firms have offered token upgrading and equal pay to blacks on the lines of the Sullivan Principles, they benefit from the fact that low-wage African labour reduces the costs of local infrastructure and inputs (as well as some foodstuffs originating from a highly developed agriculture, which also makes use of cheap labour). Further, corporate taxes can also be held down, since the state does not undertake any significant social investment for the black majority. At the same time, the local privileged white minority constitutes a substantial domestic market for durable goods.

Foreign investment is undertaken and dominated by the largest and most strategic units of capital of the imperialist economies. The profitability and stimulating effects of this investment, particularly in the Third World, contribute vitally to the reproduction of internationalised capital.* One concrete example: investments in the South African transport sector were the leading edge of foreign capital's manufacturing expansion in the country in the 1960s and 1970s, and the ability of this investment to lower total, worldwide costs facilitated competitive expansion in Europe and North America in that period.

Table 5 compares rates of return on US manufacturing operations in Europe with the performance of its manufacturing investments in South Africa.

Table 5: *Rates of return on US manufacturing operations in Europe and South Africa (%)*

	1967	1974	1980	1984
Europe	8.6	13.9	13.7	4.3
South Africa	12.6	17.9	31.7	-143*

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, US Department of Commerce

*reported loss, \$m.

And these figures understate both the true level of US investment, since some US capital is invested in South Africa through the firms of the United Kingdom, France, and West Germany in which US capital participates, and the true level of profits, since US overseas firms have devised all manner of accounting practices to underreport profits. Although GM, GE, Mobil and IBM are trumpeting their new-found sense of brotherhood, apartheid is the real music to which they dance. The problem is they have never been in deeper trouble.

Crisis and the strategic dimension

Economic slowdown

South Africa is in the throes of the most serious economic crisis since the 1930s. The regime also faces, in the tempest of the black masses, the most serious challenge to its existence. These are hardly unrelated facts, although one must be careful not to reduce them to one another. The economy grew by only 3 per cent a year between 1978 and 1984; there was an actual decline in gross domestic product in 1982-83, and

*This is a major theme and thesis of *America in Decline*.⁹

economic growth is likely to fall this year. At the level of external economic linkages, there are two major causes of the slowdown. The first involves the country's export position. Exports account for about 25 per cent of gross domestic product, and gold accounts for almost one-half of the country's exports.¹⁰ South Africa was able to ride out some of the storms of the global crisis of the mid-1970s by taking advantage of rocketing gold prices. But the price of gold has plummeted over the past four years, as have the prices of other export commodities, mostly minerals. This is a principal contributing factor to the country's current 14 per cent rate of inflation. At the same time, South Africa depends heavily on the rest of Africa as a market for intermediate and advanced goods: over one-half of its chemical exports and about three-quarters of its machinery and equipment manufacture exports were sold to the rest of Africa at various times during the 1970s. But the crisis gripping the continent has dried up many of these markets. Now if we stop to think about the role of cheap and brutally treated black labour in the South African mining industry and the relationship between the apartheid system and the fact that the most advanced operations of foreign capital on the continent are concentrated in South Africa – a phenomenon which, in the context of the overall imperialist domination of Africa, has contributed to its imbalanced development – then we see that South Africa's export difficulties are linked with the very logic and structure of the South African economy.

The second major cause of the economic slowdown concerns foreign investment. The private sector has not been gaining as much foreign capital over the last few years. Actually, net foreign investments in South Africa's private companies fell by \$360 million between 1976 and 1984. That capital inflows begin to taper off in 1976 has rather obvious significance. Soweto is erupting and the global crisis is taking its toll on capital exports. Investments in South Africa now bear a greater risk premium and international capital has less freedom to restructure globally. Since 1982, foreign capital's share of new fixed capital formation in South Africa has declined sharply, and the traditionally profitable auto industry has been in a chronic recession. US direct investment in South Africa fell in 1984, while US manufacturing corporations reported book losses in 1984 (see Table 5). Nevertheless, South Africa has managed to preserve a net surplus of long-term capital inflows. This is mainly because the government and nationalised industries have dramatically increased their international borrowings. According to Federal Reserve Bank data, the value of loans by US banks to private and public South African borrowers rose from \$1 billion in 1980 to \$4.3 billion in 1984. But, as we shall see, these loans have a decidedly and increasingly strategic cast.

Imperialism thrives on superexploitation internationally. And its economic network is overlaid by a vast structure of military,

administrative and financial control. This is perversely apparent in South Africa, and increasingly costly. State spending is about 25 per cent of gross domestic product. The state must spend on white farmers and civil servants to maintain its social base; over one-third of the white workers are employed by the state. It must cocoon and prop up certain industries for economic and strategic reasons. And it organises immense military force. By 1978, South Africa had an army of 55,000 regulars and 130,000 reserves, equipped with 362 combat planes, 91 helicopters, 170 tanks and 1,600 armoured cars. The defence budget for 1984-5 was twice its level of only four years ago.¹¹ One of the contradictions of the apartheid system is that it has grown more difficult to increase the inflow of capital and raise the rate of exploitation to a level commensurate with the needs of holding the entire enterprise together – which brings us to the conditions of those upon whom that enterprise rests.

Crisis and the black masses

The combined effects of capital-intensive development and the current recession have produced an unemployment rate among black people admitted to be in the range of 30 per cent. It is probably higher, since official statistics do not adequately capture the employment status of black women. Only about a third of the black population actually lives in the bantustans; and of those who do, only about one-tenth can eke out a living from the land. Figures for black income in the bantustans declared independent are not available (although it is known that they contributed 2.3 per cent of South Africa's total gross domestic product in 1980). But for the bantustans not declared independent by 1980, 5,163,150 people had no measurable income. The infant mortality rates for blacks in some rural areas are among the highest anywhere in the Third World. Malnutrition has grown even more acute in the countryside due to the severe drought. In the cities, where the majority of the black population lives, the estimated percentages of black households with incomes below the official household subsistence level were: Johannesburg 62 per cent, Pretoria 58 per cent, Durban and Port Elizabeth 70 per cent. In real terms, Africans' wages are decreasing.¹²

Satisfactorily to get at the depths of the contradictions in the apartheid system of cheap and coercible labour would require fuller investigation and analysis. But this much can be said. As a result of declining productive capacity and deteriorating social conditions, increasing numbers of blacks have been pushed out of the reserves, forced to lead a shadowy and desperate existence in the urban areas. Yet the institutional and economic arrangements that have been discussed in this article remain at the foundation of the South African economy.

It has been necessary to 'modernise' this system of superexploitation – limited attempts have been made to upgrade the skill levels of black

workers, to expand education and to increase mobility. But such changes *remain within the framework of apartheid*. This is not a matter of irrationality or stubbornness but of things turning into their opposite: one of the safest investments in the world is now rated as one of the riskiest; a highly profitable system is now bursting at the seams. The regime is making a show of concessions while mainly tightening up and clamping down. It must reinforce restrictive measures that limit black numbers in the urban areas in order to safeguard its rule and deflect the demand for popular rule in a unitary state. The result, however, has been the further discrediting of its tribal collaborators and homeland schemes, and an unprecedented wave of strikes, protests and violent rebellions.

The geopolitical context

The growing crisis and instability within South Africa must be seen against the canvas of its geopolitical importance to the western alliance's preparations for war against the Soviet bloc. The region's mineral resources are part of the lifeblood of the imperialist countries; the West cannot lose control over them and the Soviet-led bloc cannot allow the West to continue to control them. Further, huge quantities of Persian Gulf oil travel around the Cape of Good Hope at the tip of South Africa on the way to Europe and the Americas. The South Atlantic sea lanes are of immense economic and military importance. The Soviets have been building up their naval presence; the western alliance used the Falklands War to test and improve its naval capabilities. South Africa is not only a gendarme for western interests in Africa – as was made evident in Angola and Mozambique – but a vital quartermaster as well. By the early 1970s, South Africa could manufacture a wide range of explosives, ammunition, small arms, napalm bombs, guided missiles, aircraft, radios, mine detectors and other classified electronic equipment. This has been made possible through licensing agreements with western firms, while the auto plants in South Africa can be rapidly converted to military production. Further, the Americans, French and West Germans all played parts in helping develop various aspects of South Africa's nuclear capability. South Africa is intended to function both as an economic rear and forward staging area for military operations in a global confrontation.

And so the West has sought to bolster the regime even, and especially, in the face of mass resistance and mounting economic difficulties. US support for the regime is as predictable as it is obscene. Five months after Soweto, when the gold price was falling precipitously, South Africa asked the International Monetary Fund for a new loan. Not only did that loan go through, but during 1976 and 1977, when the regime was facing protest and pressure, South Africa received more money from the IMF than any other country except Britain and Mexico. And

'the IMF loans, as it happened, almost exactly corresponded to the increase in South Africa's arms spending during that time'.¹³ What is called 'constructive engagement' and what have come to be known as the Sullivan Principles (governing employment and pay practices of American firms in South Africa) are but the latest efforts to fortify and prettify the regime. On their own terms, the European Community and Sullivan measures to desegregate are pitiful: less than one in three British companies has desegregated its lavatories, and only 0.21 per cent of blacks working for US signatory companies hold jobs that involve supervision of whites (yes, the decimal point is in the right place).¹⁴ Recent congressional measures to curb inflows of US capital into South Africa are just another form of cosmetic surgery – for instance, US corporations can continue to reinvest retained earnings, and South Africa's mineral exports are not even touched by this legislation. Through torture, economic assistance and deception, the West is trying to prevent South Africa from exploding.

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On the problem of studying women in Cuba

For Lourdes

The Cuban Communist Party began its most important statement to date on the issue of women with the simplest of conclusions: 'In practice', it said, 'the full equality of women does not yet exist.'¹ Yet the very simplicity of the phrasing here both masks and underlines the enormous complexity of the issue. And it is a complexity which observers in the West – feminist or otherwise – have not yet come to grips with, even in the most schematic of terms. Indeed, the literature produced so far about women in the Cuban Revolution has been extraordinarily limited, even in its own terms. It has tended to cover, again and again, the same terrain in rather summary fashion, with variations which play themselves out with a fairly constant predictability. There is, first of all, the body of literature produced by the academic 'Havana watchers'.² The subject of women occupies only a minor role in their work: their overriding concern is with watching the peregrinations of what they term the 'elites' of the Revolution, and by their own definition, 'elites' virtually excludes women. When they do consider the subject of women, their discussions and conclusions are, like the bulk of their work in general, at best somehow irrelevant, and at worst misleading. They fill tens and hundreds of pages with facts and figures;

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yet Cuba itself seems to slip through their fingers like so much sand through a sieve. On women, the conclusions they seem to draw from these facts and figures have, not strangely, little to do with the fundamental realities of women's experience in revolutionary Cuba.

Secondly, there is the body of feminist work, which tends to look at the Cuban experience only to dismiss it as yet another example of the fact that socialism does not liberate women.³ The inability of western feminists and Cuban women leaders to communicate is notorious, and, by all appearances, very much a two-way street. Thus, for instance, Vilma Espin, the head of the Federation of Cuban Women, still regularly replies to questions concerning her impressions of the western women's movement by saying 'We're feminine, not feminist'. And western feminists' inability to deal with the specifics of the Cuban situation is perhaps nowhere more clearly captured than in the reaction of a recent US women's delegation to the classical Cuban painting 'The Rape of the Mulattas', a canvas which speaks to the reality of a colonial, slaveholding society: 'In the US,' said one delegate, 'we carry whistles.'

And finally, there are those observers who define themselves as socialist feminists; that is, as women who are sympathetic to both socialist and feminist theory and practice, and who believe that some fusion, some union of the two, is possible. There have been a series of articles produced by socialist feminists on the subject of women over the twenty-five years of the Cuban Revolution: each tends, by and large, to be simply a rewrite of its predecessor.⁴

These three approaches have, strange as it may seem, a great deal in common. Above all, what has been consistently true of each of them is their inability, or at least their failure so far, to get at the complexity of the issues surrounding the situation of Cuban women. Thus, for instance, whatever its particular perspective, every article written on the subject seems to treat the issue of women's changing or unchanging position in revolutionary Cuba as if it were on a continuum – a process that began in 1959 and has proceeded apace since that time, a process which can, therefore, be stopped at any given point and measured in its totality. Yet no serious student of the Cuban Revolution would dream of treating the economy, or political structures, or the position of workers, along this same continuum. And for good reason: it would be impossible to understand changes in political structures from the 1960s to the 1970s, or in workplace organisations, without understanding the fundamental alterations or swings in the Cuban leadership's concept of how socialism and communism are to be achieved.

These changes in political and economic organisation must be located within the abandonment of the 1960s' idea that the Cubans could find their own path to communism, using, as Fidel phrased it, 'political awareness to create wealth', and not 'money or wealth to

create political awareness'.⁵ In essence, Fidel was saying here that an evolving communist consciousness would be the major means by which Cuba would overcome underdevelopment and create the abundance upon which the future society must be based, a task which in the historical experience of actually existing socialism had been allocated to be accomplished during the socialist interlude. By 1970, faced with the reality of economic failure, administrative chaos and the resulting acute and generalised popular discontent, the Cuban leadership was forced to abandon its belief that socialism and communism could be achieved simultaneously. Instead, it returned to the more orthodox conception that the passage to communism is achieved through stages, that Cuba was in the initial stage of the transition to socialism, and that institutions, structures and value formation had to correspond to this reality. The effects of this far reaching revision upon political and economic structures have been documented, however inadequately. Yet in concrete ways, these fundamental changes must have had an equally dramatic effect on the position of women within Cuban society: the available literature, however, gives no indication of the nature of these effects.

What this means can, perhaps, be seen more clearly by examining, briefly, the patterns of change in two areas which vitally concern women and which are central to any assessment of their position within a given society: the family, and women's entry into the labour force.

With regard to the family, the continuum approach tells us that, for better or worse, depending on the interpretation, the Revolution has had a fairly consistent attitude and has pursued a consistent policy. In fact, this is not so: the transition from the 1960s to the 1970s, generally, was mirrored by a definitive and fundamental change in the Revolution's attitude and policy towards the family. In the 1960s, the family as an institution was, in a very real sense, ignored: this is perhaps best captured by Che Guevara, who, while serving as Minister of Industries in the early 1960s, was asked by an interviewer if the Revolution was actively making policy against the family. His response was all revealing: not so much against the family, he replied, as without taking it into consideration. The period was one of enormous collective activity and movement, whose scope is perhaps best exemplified by the 1961 Literacy Campaign, in which over 100,000 young people, some as young as 12 or 13 years, went off to the countryside to live, work with and teach illiterate peasants. Of this 100,000, some 55,000 were young girls, many of whom went in active defiance of middle-class parents who had rigid and traditional ideas about the proper realm of their daughters' activities.⁶ It was a period in which plans were being laid for a school system which would essentially provide a sphere for education separate from the family. The schools in the countryside, boarding schools where children live, study and work, were to be established not simply at the junior high school level (where, indeed, they were eventually instituted),

but throughout the educational structure. And it was a period in which families were being physically torn asunder: there could hardly have been a family on the island which did not have some relative among the people who left Cuba in the first five years of the Revolution. This dynamic alone necessitated and reinforced the leadership's insistence that the Revolution itself be the central focus of concern, the central institution, that its survival and its development be the chief priority. Inherent in this notion was the idea that the Revolution would replace the family as the primary, if not the only, agency of socialisation. Children would be brought up in the Revolution: they would imbibe it in their every contact; they would be steeped in it in their schools and their activities; they would learn from the example of revolutionary leaders. Revolutionary society itself, defined here both as institutions and as a general atmosphere, would take over the entire process of socialisation and education: the role of parents was to be of secondary, if any, importance. Again, it is Che who best captured this vision: in the letter he wrote to Fidel upon his departure to begin a revolutionary guerrilla *foco* in the Andes of Bolivia, he declared, 'I leave my children and wife nothing material, and I am not ashamed. I am glad it is so. I ask nothing for them, as the state will give them enough with which to live and be educated.'⁷

With the transition to the more orthodox view of socialist construction in the early 1970s, a different, more conservative and traditional view of the family emerged, for reasons directly relating to changes in the situation of the Revolution and the process of institutionalisation* which was initiated in that period. At one level, this shift was simply a recognition of reality: given the enormity of the change which the Revolution initiated, and the inevitable chaos which ensued upon this change, the family provided, for most people, a sense of refuge and respite, an anchor. Indeed, people never considered abandoning it. Moreover, with the 1970s, and the emergence of a new generation born into the Revolution and not, therefore, formed or informed by pre-revolutionary reality, a youth problem, albeit not on a major scale, began to emerge. This problem was accentuated by the reintroduction in

* This involved practically every structure which had functioned and/or misfunctioned during the 1960s. It encompassed the reorganisation of the work process (including the introduction of norms, a return to material as opposed to moral incentives and a drastic decline in reliance upon voluntary labour); the re-invigoration of the trade unions, together with the remainder of the mass organisations; the reorganisation of the legal and juridical structure, culminating in 1975 in the passage of an entirely new constitution; the reorganisation of the party structure and the search for a more collective form of leadership; the restructuring of the organisation of the state itself through the introduction, on an experimental basis in 1974, and on a national basis in 1976, of the system of Popular Power; and finally, a re-emphasis upon the family as the major agency of socialisation within the Revolution, as captured in the 1975 passage of the Family Code.

the early 1970s of material incentives and with it, the growth in availability of goods and the usefulness of money. The Cuban leadership began to identify one of the sources of youthful delinquency as precisely those forces operating to dilute the role of the family. The state – the Revolution – could not, in fact, handle by itself the entire education and socialisation of children: the family had to take on a central, if not the central role, in this process. Thus, in Cuba in the 1970s, the concept of the socialist family emerged, and the family assumed enormous prominence and importance. It is at this point that the Revolution began to articulate a conscious policy with relation to the family. The 1975 Family Code, which put forth a new set of norms for family life in Cuba, cannot be understood outside this context.

In the case of women's entry into the workforce, there is an excellent example of the manner in which adherence to the continuum approach results in misleading – indeed false – conclusions. Jorge Domínguez, one of the deans of the 'Havana watchers', in his recent and massive study, *Cuba: Revolution and Order*, asserts, as his interpretation of women's entry into the workforce after 1959, the following: 'A modernization hypothesis is sufficient to explain the trends in the incorporation of Cuban women into the paid workforce. Indeed, it is difficult to perceive any effects of the advent of the revolution on women's employment, since the rate of incorporation is fairly steady.'⁸

Yet, if one breaks down this rate of incorporation, as Lourdes Casal has done in her article, 'Revolution and Conciencia: women in Cuba',⁹ and attempts to understand it within the historical and socio-economic context in which it took place, such a conclusion is simply impossible. Thus, for instance, what is most remarkable is that in the early years of the Revolution there wasn't a drastic decline in the number of women working – it is remarkable on a number of levels. First, the Revolution immediately undertook an enormous project of re-educating women who had been forced, before 1959, to work in degrading and subservient occupations. These efforts at re-education touched, in particular, the large numbers of domestic servants (30 per cent of women in the labour force – more than one out of every four – worked as domestics before the Revolution),¹⁰ and prostitutes. Secondly, the general and widespread expansion of educational opportunities, at all levels and in all areas, certainly affected women who might otherwise have entered the workforce directly. And finally, the redistributive policies of the government, and its guarantees of basic needs, must have acted, in part, as a disincentive, a pull out of the paid labour force, for many women who had formerly worked as a matter of survival. The disincentive to work could only have been underscored by the dramatic decline in the availability of goods that began in the early years of the Revolution and reached a climax during the years of 'simultaneous construction of socialism and communism', when a US-led blockade and a 31 per cent

investment ratio combined virtually to wipe clean the shelves of every store on the island.¹¹ The fact that there was little to buy made money increasingly abundant and increasingly superfluous as the 1960s proceeded. Clearly, given these incentives to withdraw from the paid labour force, the fact that the 1960s saw a steady, if gradual, overall increase in the numbers of women working, indicates that something was indeed having an effect on incorporating women into the workforce – and it would not be amiss to suggest that this something was probably the Revolution. Yet no account of all this can be taken if only the figures on the rate of entry into the workforce are considered.

Nor do the figures alone – all that the continuum model takes into account – give insight into the significance of the patterns in women working in the 1970s. Institutionalisation has seen the end of labour shortages, and even some unemployment (estimated at about 80,000 by Fidel at the June 1978 meeting of the National Assembly of Popular Power). This is exactly the situation in which the ‘Havana watchers’, and certain feminist scholars,¹² predicted that the Revolution would stop fooling around with women, and end its efforts to recruit them into the paid labour force. And yet, this has, in fact, not happened. In 1975, women represented 25.3 per cent of the paid workforce;¹³ by 1981, this figure stood at 32 per cent and at present, it is 38.9 per cent.¹⁴ Again, this is significant on a number of levels. First, it gives evidence that the leadership is indeed committed to the goal of incorporating women into the workforce, and not merely to make up for scarce labour. Secondly, it is a clear reflection of the change the Revolution underwent in the 1970s: women’s continued entry into the workforce after 1970 reflects, at least in part, Cuba’s return to a more traditional path to socialism in which money again had value and goods were available for purchase.

The tendency to measure the changes in women’s position after the Revolution along a continuum has, of course, something to do with the availability of material, and with the fact that much of this material – including official Cuban government statements – assumes the same continuity. It also has something to do with the failure of observers to understand revolution as a process – and a process doesn’t mean a straight line, and cannot, in fact, be frozen at any given stage. The experience of women in Cuba cannot be selectively extracted without taking into account tendencies, directions and contradictions – that is, without locating this experience within the whole. This is both cause and result of the fact that work on Cuban women tends so overwhelmingly to be descriptive; that only exceptionally does it attempt to address theory, and almost never to redress it.¹⁵ This is true even of the socialist feminists’ writing about Cuban women, for whom such theoretical considerations should be a key concern. The point is not to use the Cuban experience to measure or dismiss marxist theory vis-à-vis women, but rather to examine that theory in the light of what we know

about that experience, of what we see as tendencies common to all the societies of actually existing socialism.

What is true, and particularly, it can be argued, for socialist feminists, is that the Cuban experience with relation to women is problematic. A part of this problematic is specific to Cuba: it derives from inherited traditions and ways of doing things. A part of it is the legacy of underdevelopment and the unbroken constancy of external threat. But much of the problematic is demonstrated not simply by Cuba, but by all actually existing socialist countries, developed and underdeveloped. This would seem to indicate that its roots are not simply in practice, but in socialist theory itself, as it relates to women. For the fact is that certain of the *structural* barriers which this theory predicted would disappear in the transition to socialism remain and, in remaining, have even been fortified.

In Cuba at least, all of this *must* be considered – indeed, can only be understood – within the context of the enormous changes and transformations which the Revolution has wrought upon the lives of women, changes aimed exactly at removing the structural base of women's inequality. In general, and for all Cubans, the transition to socialism, with the consequent elimination of private property and redistribution of the surplus, has meant recognition and action upon what are understood as basic human rights: the right to be literate and to be educated; the right to free and full health care; the right to a means of subsistence. For women, all this has meant, as well, a release from economic subservience, from inescapable bondage to males as the sole means of survival for themselves and their children. This release is starkly reflected in the divorce rate, which, in the first ten years of the Revolution, jumped to five times its size in 1959.¹⁶ Moreover, the Revolution has evolved policies which relate specifically to women. The first of these policies can be understood as the recognition, from the very beginning, of the depth of the problem concerning women. This recognition was embodied in the creation of the Federation of Cuban Women, the FMC. Of the socialist revolutions of more than a decade's duration, only Cuba has maintained an unbroken commitment to a mass organisation of women (albeit and this is critical set up by and an agency of the revolutionary leadership). Moreover, the Revolution has initiated changes in the legal system which essentially dismantle, on a formal level, the structures of discrimination. The 1976 Cuban constitution, in article 45, establishes the equal rights of men and women in the economy, in political and social fields, and explicitly extends this equality to the realm of the family. In this, the constitution reaffirms the 1975 Family Code, which, in six articles, spells out the equality of rights and duties of men and women within matrimony, extending itself to considerations of material and emotional support and to the sharing of household duties. The Maternity Code, enacted in 1973, places Cuba

among the world's most advanced countries with regard to maternity rights: it extends to women eighteen weeks of paid maternity leave, and a year's unpaid leave.¹⁷ In another realm, by stretching the limits imposed by a still underdeveloped economy, the Revolution has moved in limited arenas towards the socialisation of domestic labour, at least for women who work: the most visible expressions of this movement are workers' cafeterias, laundry services, boarding schools in the countryside and the provision of daycare. Further, various experiments have been carried out, with equally varying degrees of success, to facilitate women's entry into and continuance in the paid labour force: special shopping hours in stores for women workers, the ineffective *plan jaba* (or shopping bag plan), which gave women workers priority in food marketing; and, where possible, varying work hours.* All this is particularly impressive given the more or less continuous economic difficulties which have plagued the Revolution during the course of its twenty-five years.

Yet, while all of these measures represent a wide-ranging attempt to remove the structural barriers to women's equality and their ability to develop to their full potential, in one whole area such structural barriers remain firmly in place, and, relatively speaking, pervasive. They centre around and are rooted in a continuing sexual division of labour: it is this which must be seen as the key perpetrator of continuing inequality between men and women in Cuba. Its effects can be seen in the type of work in the public sector in which women are primarily engaged. Of course, there are exceptions inconceivable in pre-revolutionary Cuba – exceptions which encompass the increasing number of women working in construction, for instance (44,017 members of the workforce in construction are now women),¹⁹ or, most recently, a woman ship's captain. Nonetheless, they remain exceptions. The overwhelming majority of women work in areas in which women have traditionally worked – in Cuba as elsewhere. Thus, Cuban women dominate textile and plastics manufacture, and light industry in general, including tobacco, a key industry for the Cuban economy, and an area in which the importance of a woman's 'lighter', more 'delicate' touch has always been highly regarded. Further, women are disproportionately employed in the areas of education, public health and services in general; again, this reflects traditional patterns in the sexual division of labour worldwide.

* Discussions at the recently held (March 1985) Fourth Congress of the FMC indicate continuing efforts in this direction, over, for example, keeping daycare facilities and schools open on Saturday morning (the Cuban working week includes one Saturday morning in two). Also hotly argued was the rule that only female relatives are allowed to give constant attendance (on a 24-hour basis) to a sick person in hospital – in the case of a child, only the mother.¹⁸

Moreover, in employment areas in Cuba where household tasks have been collectivised, to whatever degree – areas such as daycare, laundry services or collective cafeterias, that is, in the social projections of traditional privatised women's work – it is still women who carry out these tasks in the public sphere. Thus, the very collectivisation of women's work serves to reinforce the sexual division of labour. The basic lines of this feminisation of job categories form a pattern not only in Cuba, but in all the countries of actually existing socialism.

The sexual division of labour is, as well, the crucial underpinning to the systematic and serious under-representation of women in leadership positions in the major political institutions of the country – including not only the governmental structures and the party, but also the youth organisation, the League of Young Communists (UJC), and even the leadership of the mass organisations. The party is, of course, the directing body of the Revolution: under-representation of women here means that it is overwhelmingly men who chart the nature of revolutionary initiatives and the direction of the Revolution itself. Entrance into the ranks of the party is through the workplace: it is workers who choose from among their ranks those who are to be candidates for party membership. Thus, the fact that women compose 38.9 per cent of the workforce places immediate structural limitations upon the numbers of women who might be eligible for party membership. Actual female party membership in 1975 comprised only 13.23 per cent of total membership.²⁰ In 1980, after a concerted drive to increase female representation in the party to make it equal to the percentage of women in the workforce, this figure was increased to 18.9 per cent.²¹ In the leadership structures of the party, the number of women decreases dramatically: in 1975, women held only 2.9 per cent of leadership positions at the base municipal level, and only 6.3 per cent at the provincial level, 4 per cent at the regional level and 5.5 per cent at the national level.²² At the very pinnacle of the party structure, 5 per cent of the Central Committee membership in 1975 was female;²³ the Politburo (with the exception of Vilma Espin, who serves as an alternate member) and the Secretariat of the party were entirely male. This same pattern registers itself in Popular Power, the new governmental structure set up on a nationwide basis in 1976. After four national elections, in the 1984 assemblies the total number of women delegates at the base (municipal) level stood at 11.5 per cent²⁴ (at the national level of Popular Power, women comprise 22.6 per cent of the total number of deputies²⁵); only two women serve on the Council of Ministers, and these women head ministries which encompass the traditional female work categories education and light industry.²⁶ Perhaps the most telling evidence of the holding power of the sexual division of labour is that these same patterns, even if proportionately less severe, are reproduced within the UJC, which is made up of those between the ages of 18 and 27. That is,

the pattern reproduces itself even among those born into the Revolution and formed within its structures. In 1975, total female membership stood at 29 per cent, and only 10 per cent of the total leadership was female.²⁷ And even in the case of the neighbourhood organisations, the Committees in Defence of the Revolution, where women, comprising 50 per cent of the membership, seem to play a much more active role, at the national level, they are only 19 per cent of the leadership.²⁸ It is only in the ranks of the trade union leadership that women fill positions proportional to, or in excess of, their representation in the concerned population: by 1980, 40 per cent of all base level trade union leadership was female.²⁹ This may well be another reflection or result of the conscious and concerted effort made by the Revolution with relation to women and work in what is defined as the productive sector.

The under-representation of women from leadership positions in the political structures of Cuban society is given a concrete, explicit form in the economy. In 1976, despite opposition expressed by the Federation of Cuban Women at its second congress in 1974, the State Committee on Work and Social Security (CETSS) issued a list of some 300-odd employment areas from which women were to be excluded.³⁰ This list, it should be noted, has been gradually whittled down to about twenty-five positions. Moreover, women already working in any of the restricted occupations were not summarily dismissed from their jobs. Nonetheless, the list gives the force of law to a systematised division of labour. While some of the categories seem to make no sense at all, except as expressions of age-old prejudices and fears about women (such as prohibitions on women working under water, or on construction of buildings of more than five storeys), by and large, the classification is based on possible dangers inherent in a given job for future childbearing. This list operates, thus, on the assumption that all women want to be mothers. (This belief in a women's destiny and need is raised almost to the level of ideology in daycare centres, where all those who work directly with children are female. Cubans explain, if asked, that young children require mother's or substitute mother's love.³¹)

This belief rests at the heart of the sexual division of labour. In its turn, then, it critically underpins the continuation (despite the Family Code) of a double burden for women in Cuba. And it is this double burden which makes it so difficult, for instance, for women to gain access into the party. For such access requires not simply their presence in the workforce, but the kind of active participation in the workplace which might distinguish individual women as potential candidates. For women who are chiefly responsible for both home and children, such active and time-consuming participation is often simply impossible. This is nowhere more starkly captured than in a survey done by the party after the 1974 Popular Power election in Matanzas, which served as a forerunner to the establishment of Popular Power on a national scale.

In that election, only 7 per cent of those nominated and only 3 per cent of those elected as base level delegates were female.³² When women were asked whether, if nominated, they would have agreed to run, some 54.3 per cent said no, overwhelmingly because of domestic obligations.³³ And similarly, in a party survey of 211 workplaces, 85.7 per cent of the women said that domestic obligations inhibited greater participation on their part.³⁴

Having said all this, it is incumbent upon us to note that the leadership of the Revolution is aware of the numerical dimensions of the problem and has, particularly over the last eight years, launched a frontal attack at least on its overt manifestations. The campaign initiated and carried out by the leadership to correct continuing numerical inequities is reflected in its policies and policy statements. It is reflected in the results of the drive to increase female representation in political leadership structures – for instance, the jump in female party membership from 13 per cent in 1975 to 18.9 per cent in 1980, or perhaps more significantly, the 11 per cent increase (to 40 per cent) of women members in the UJC.³⁵ And finally, it is reflected in the fact that, within the governmental structure, the number of women deputies to the national assembly was in 1981 three times as many proportionately as the number of women delegates to the base level municipal assembly.³⁶ This represents an exact reversal of the pattern which has held consistently true in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union,³⁷ and must reflect the fact that the selection of candidates for national assembly deputies is strongly influenced by upper level party structures and that, at its upper levels, the party is pushing women's representation. Nor is the problem tangential to wider public consciousness: the ferment, reaction and discussion which surrounded a recent Cuban film, 'Portrait of Teresa', which dealt, among other things, with the double burden of women and with double sexual standards, gives clear evidence of this. Moreover, in the long term, the fact that women comprise 50 per cent of all those presently engaged in advanced scientific or technological structures, and 42 per cent of the student population in fields such as economics, suggests that, at a minimum, the educational foundation for women's participation in high level decision-making is being laid.³⁸

But it is both necessary and critical to note that certain key aspects of the ideological underpinnings of the sexual division of labour remain almost unchallenged, above all the notions surrounding the female as mother, and the absolute primacy of biological functions. The most visible evidence of this is, of course, the existence of the job listing, whether adhered to or not, even in the aftermath of the Family Code (which is commonly understood as a radical challenge to the inherited family structure), and the terms of the discussion which seems always to surround this listing. This discussion inevitably centres around the need to protect the 'female reproductive organs', without, seemingly, any

conception that a woman might choose *not* to be a mother. Indeed, it is reasserted in the constitution itself, which states simply that women should be 'given jobs in keeping with their physical makeup'.³⁹

The question that has to be addressed is, of course, that of the sources of the sexual division of labour. Its seeds are embedded and embodied very clearly in the family and in concepts of sexuality; not simply, I would argue, in the heritage of classical marxist thinking (or lack of it) on these issues, but in the specific historical reality of the family and of sexuality in Cuban colonial/slave society, in post-colonial Cuba and in revolutionary Cuba. This is, I believe, one of the critical directions which future work by feminists about the experience of Cuban women must take.⁴⁰ Here, however, I pick up only one strand of this historical theoretical web, the legacy of marxist thought concerning the family and the manner in which the Cuban experience speaks to, and underlines, its critical inadequacies.

The heritage of marxist thinking about the family is, at the least, confused, contradictory and fragmented. According to it (largely as it is distilled by Engels), capitalism, while not the original generator of a sexual division of labour, acts, in practice, to aggravate sexually based exploitation. It is the development of capitalism which first generates the critical split between the private and the public spheres, privatising the family, creating in its wake, Engels' 'millions of tiny (and isolated) workshops'. Thus, while capitalism itself generates the preconditions, within the public sphere, of its own destruction, both by developing the means of production and by concentrating workers in larger and larger workplaces, thereby enabling a transformation of the social relations of production, no such concentration, or the transformation of consciousness it allows, happens in the private sphere.⁴¹ Rather, the family has been atomised and stripped of all productive activity not specifically and directly tied to the replacement of labour power—that is, to reproduction. This atomisation of the family serves political as well as economic functions. Among its effects, it guarantees, by isolating her, the ideological backwardness of woman remaining in the household.

The legacy of marxism with regard to the future of the family under socialism is rooted in this analysis, and is, at best, ambiguous. At its most radical implication, it seems to point to the elimination of the family, or, at minimum, the elimination of the most regressive aspects of the family. It takes as given that only with the disappearance of the regressive content of the family can the oppression and exploitation of women disappear. Much of this content centres around the economic functions of the family: the idea is that socialism, by undermining and eventually freeing the household of its economic content, and of its role in economic exploitation, will free women for full development.

Clearly, the progression of history has spelled the error of this formulation. In Cuba specifically, the family has been largely freed of its

functions in the cycle of economic exploitation. And there has indeed been an enormous increase in the number of women engaged in activities outside the home; that is, outside the atomising unit which, according to marxist theory, had guaranteed their stunted growth. Yet clearly, certain key features of the old sexual division of labour, both in the public sphere and in the home, remain. And they have proven enormously difficult to root out, exactly because these roots are embedded so deeply in the 'private sphere' - that is, in the family, and in sexuality.

This, perhaps, leads to some hypotheses about why it is that Cuba has been so much more successful in getting rid of the structural and non-structural bases of racism than it has in ridding itself of the bases of sexual discrimination and oppression. Racial questions tend to be rooted in and played out in the public sphere, and it is exactly the public sphere

the civil society - which has been transformed by the Revolution. The privatisation of the family, part and parcel of Cuba's heritage as a capitalist - albeit in a distorted form - country, inhibits such transformation. Almost by definition, intervention in the private sphere is taboo. Thus, for instance, if we compare Cuba to China, a country which largely skipped the capitalist stage, we must be struck by the much more active, more direct intervention into family matters, for better or for worse, which has been carried out by the Chinese.⁴² In Cuba, even in the 1970s and 1980s, when the institution of the family has been invested with far greater importance, the farthest the Revolution has dared to push in directing this institution is the Family Code, which with regard to male-female behaviour is not as much a legal code as it is a set of norms designed hopefully to influence this behaviour.

All of this stands merely as a suggestion of possible interpretations, a suggestion, again, reinforced by the fact that the perpetuation of a fundamental sexual division of labour remains a constant common to all socialist countries, developed as well as underdeveloped. It points us towards a thorough re-examination of theory, which takes cognizance of the realities of actually existing socialist societies.

Since the Revolution took power, Cuba as a whole has been seen in the West always in extreme terms: it has tended to be described either as Heaven, Hell or Paradise Lost. Many people, especially in the 1960s, and among these, many women, saw it as the first: the place where all the problems which plagued their own societies would be solved, overnight. In hindsight (of course) this seems a bit ridiculous from the outset, given the indisputable and unchanging fact that it is a tiny, underdeveloped island. As the 1960s faded into the 1970s, and as the women's movement began to move in different directions, many of these same people began to see Cuba as a kind of Paradise Lost: an interpretation that was reinforced by Cuba's return to a more traditional route to socialism. And at the same time, many people, both exiles and otherwise, from the Revolution's beginnings up to the present, saw it as

the equivalent of hell on earth. One of the curious features about these three extreme interpretations is that issues related to women have been used and focused upon by people attempting to prove each of them.

It is perhaps most clear, given all this, that what is needed in the study of women in Cuba is a framework for engaging in such a study. This framework must be rooted both in theoretical considerations and in a practical understanding of the daily reality of being a woman in Cuba. It must be capable of taking into account both the fundamental transformations of this reality which have occurred and are occurring, and, at the same time, the fundamental problems which remain.

References

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- 2 Among the 'deans' of the academic 'Havana watchers' only one, Jorge Domínguez, in his 1978 tome, *Cuba: order and revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978) has given any consideration to the problematic of women. For the fullest discussion and critique of Domínguez' treatment of the subject, see Lourdes Casal, 'Revolution and Conciencia: women in Cuba', in Carol Berkin and Clara Lovett (eds), *Women, War and Revolution* (New York, 1980).
- 3 In this regard, see especially Susan Kaufman Purcell, 'Modernizing Women for a Modern Society: the Cuban case', in Ann Pescatello (ed.), *Female and Male in Latin America* (Pittsburgh, 1973).
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There have been a few efforts directly to engage the Cuban experience in a discussion of issues related to the difficult discourse between marxism and feminism. See, in particular, Marifeli Stable Perez, 'The Emancipation of Cuban Women', a paper presented at the Institute of Cuban Studies Conference on Women and Change in Cuba, Boston University, 6-7 May, 1977; and Nicola Murray, 'Women and the Cuban Revolution, Parts 1 and 2', in *Feminist Review* (Nos 2 and 3, 1979). Murray is particularly courageous in attempting to confront the Cuban situation as a feminist and a socialist, although her sources of information are not entirely reliable. Fur-

thermore, several articles have appeared recently which attempt to arrive at a framework of analysis by including Cuba within a comparative examination of the experience of women in various socialist societies. See, in particular, Elizabeth Croll, 'Women in Rural Production and Reproduction in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba and Tanzania: socialist development experiences' and 'Case Studies', in *Signs* (Vol. 7, no. 2, Winter 1981), and Maxine Molyneux, 'Socialist Societies Old and New: progress towards women's emancipation', in *Feminist Review* (No. 8, summer 1981).

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- 8 Jorge Dominguez, op. cit., pp. 498-99.
- 9 See Lourdes Casal, op. cit., pp. 189-91.
- 10 Ibid., p. 188.
- 11 Bertram Silverman (ed.) op. cit., p. 30. Silverman cites the figure of 31 per cent for the year 1968.
- 12 See Susan Kaufman Purcell, op. cit.
- 13 'Sobre el Pleno Ejercicio de la Igualdad de la Mujer', op. cit., p. 580.
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- 16 J. Hernandez et al, *Estudio Sobre el Divorcio* (Havana, 1973).
- 17 The Maternity Code and excerpts from the Family Code are available in English translation in E. Stone, op. cit. The entire Family Code (in translation) is printed in the Center for Cuban Studies *Newsletter* (Vol. II, no. 4).
- 18 *Granma* (7 March 1984)
- 19 *Granma* (7 March 1984). This represents an increase of women workers in construction from 1982, when women comprised 11.5 per cent of the construction workforce.
- 20 'Sobre el Pleno Ejercicio de la Igualdad de la Mujer', op. cit., p. 585.
- 21 Fidel Castro, 'Speech to the Closing Session of the Third Congress of the Federation of Cuban Women', in *Granma Weekly Review* (16 March 1980), p. 3.
- 22 'Sobre el Pleno Ejercicio de la Igualdad de la Mujer', op. cit., p. 585. These figures were compiled before the new administrative reorganisation, which eliminates the regional level, rationalises the size of the municipalities and expands the number of provinces from six to fourteen, went into effect.
- 23 *Granma Weekly Review* (4 January 1976), p. 9.
- 24 *Granma* (24 April 1984), p. 1. The percentage of women elected to the municipal level assemblies in the three prior elections (1976, 1979 and 1981) fluctuated slightly, downward and then upward. Thus, in 1976, 8 per cent of those elected were women; in 1979, the figure diminished to 7.2 per cent; in 1981, it rose to 7.8 per cent (Comision Electoral Nacional, *Informacion Estadistica del Proceso Electoral 1981* (La Habana, 1982), pp. 13, 14. The 4 per cent increase to 11.5 per cent is then significant, but clearly hardly an indication of equality, nor even a confirmation of an upward

trend.

25 Ibid., p. 16.

26 Cited in L. Casal, op. cit., p. 196.

27 'Sobre el Pleno Ejercicio de la Igualdad de la Mujer', op. cit., p. 585.

28 Ibid., p. 585.

29 Fidel Castro, op. cit., p. 3.

30 *Granma* (1 June 1976).

31 There is, however, some indication that this notion is beginning to be challenged. For instance, Osmany Cienfuegos, representing the leadership on the occasion of International Women's Day in 1983, spoke of the need for more 'enfermeros' and 'enfermeras', or nurses, in the daycare centres. His explicit use of the male form, *enfermeros*, implies the beginning of a fundamental change in the practice of employing women exclusively to work on a daily and direct basis with children in daycare centres.

32 See Fidel Castro, 26 July 1974, in Matanzas, *Granma Weekly Review* (4 August 1974).

33 'Sobre el Pleno Ejercicio de la Igualdad de la Mujer', op. cit., p. 584.

34 Ibid., p. 586.

35 Fidel Castro, 'Speech to the Closing Session of the Third Congress of the Federation of Cuban Women', op. cit., p. 3.

36 See *Sobre la Constitución del Poder Popular* (La Habana, n.d.), and *Información Estadística del Proceso Electoral 1981*, op. cit.

37 See Barbar Wolfe Jancar, *Women Under Communism* (Baltimore, 1978), in particular Ch. 5.

38 See Lourdes Casal, op. cit., p. 192.

39 *Constitution of the Republic of Cuba* (1976), Chapter V, Article 43 (published in English translation by the Center for Cuban Studies).

40 Some background work has been done already in this direction, specifically, Vera Martínez Alíer's *Marriage, Class and Colour in Nineteenth-Century Cuba*; de la Torre Mulhare's 'Sexual attitudes in pre-revolutionary Cuba' (Unpublished thesis PhD dissertation, University of Pittsburgh); Julianne Burton's excellent discussion of 'Portrait of Teresa' in *Semiotext* (1982), and Allen Young's recent work on Cuban (particularly post-revolutionary) attitudes towards homosexuals.

41 The discussion which follows owes a great deal to the work of Isabel Largaia and John Demoulin, see note 15.

42 See, in particular, Kay Ann Johnson, *Women, Family and Peasant Revolution in China* (Chicago, 1983). We are not here, by any means, advocating greater state intervention into the family as any form of solution; the results of recent Chinese policy attempting to regulate the number of children women are allowed to bear is only the most recent of a long list of such manipulations of women's bodies and lives by certain of the actually existing socialist states.

The African diaspora and the Italo-Ethiopian crisis

There are several ways of treating the intersection of the African diaspora and the crisis which brought about the invasion of Ethiopia by an Italian Army in 1935. What some of those choices are can be discovered by a careful consideration of the metaphorical notion of the African diaspora.

The term diaspora is originally Greek, we are told; a derivation from a word referring to the sowing of seed. The African diaspora, as we shall see, refers to a multiplicity of events and processes of quite different classifications depicted by the images drawn from cultivation, planting and the genetic cycle of the plant.

For one, the notion of the African diaspora can be used as a reference to the dispersal, diffusion and eventual syncretism in the western hemisphere of a civilisation; the mechanisms of scatter and cluster being slave trades, systems of indentured labour, and subsequent migration. This formulation is an attempt to avoid the error of confusing the dispersal of people with the dispersal of *a* people. Still, it is a foreshortened historical construction of a diaspora which leaves unexamined an earlier period of African and European military and cultural encounters of a rather different polarity. I refer to the Muslim and Moor conquests of the northern and eastern Mediterranean. This earlier period would have profound effects on medieval Iberia, Italy and the Church of Rome, all protagonists in the more modern drama

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which is our subject. Suffice it to say here that the two diasporas encompassed by this millennium were not unrelated.

A second meaning of the African diaspora would be a reference to the modern political states in which it was singularly implicated and which came to mark the diplomatic and economic landscapes of the crisis to which we refer: Liberia, the West African entity whose history until very recently had been dominated by the descendants of African-American freedmen and their American sponsors; Haiti, in every sense of the phrase the issue of a slave revolution; and Ethiopia, the nation occupying the only space on the map of Africa in the early twentieth century to which cartographers had assigned no stain for western imperialism. 'The only oasis in a desert of rank subjugation from the avaricious hands of a foreign domination', as someone desperately put it in early 1936 to the West African newspaper, the *Gold Coast Independent*.¹

Finally, the diaspora could refer to what some have called Pan-Africanism, others the Black Radical Tradition, and still others 'Ethiopianism', that is, an emerging radical and nationalist consciousness of revivalist, charismatic or millenarian character. Its formation was in evidence as the Watch Tower movement (1908) and the Nyasaland Rising (1915) in East Africa; in South Africa, in the Industrial union movement under Clements Kadalie (1919-1926) and the Israelite movement crushed in 1921; in Kimbanguism in the Belgian Congo beginning in the 1920s; in the 'Back to Abyssinia' movement (1919) in the US; in the 'Negritude' movement and resistances of occupied Haiti; in the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) founded in colonial Jamaica during the First World War and which assumed its mature form in the United States, Central America and the African continent; and in the Rastafarian sect begun in Kingston in the 1930s.² As George Shepperson has attested, this emergent consciousness was transmitted along the geopolitical currents of colonialism and colonial labour, and circumscribed at least three continents. Referring to one of the leaders of the Land-Freedom Army in Kenya (the settlers' 'Mau-mau') in the 1950s, Shepperson recalled:

Waruhiu Itote ('General China') served with the 11th East African Division in Burma, as I did; and, when out of action and at a Rest Camp in Calcutta, he met 'a tall and powerful Negro from the American South' who 'was fond of talking about wars and revolutions - his favourite example was Haiti, where black men had fought and won their freedom from Napoleon, despite claims that they could never succeed'.³

The African diaspora, then, has historical, political, organisational and ideological meanings and implications which bear on the Italian-Ethiopian crisis in no simple or readily contrived fashion.

A second axis along which the crisis of 1935 must be resolved is observed by its designation 'Italian-Ethiopian'. That convention conflates a rather more complicated series. First, both Italy and Ethiopia were *empires* and in an era in which the proper sort of imperialism was acceptable. Moreover, in both instances, imperialism was rationalised on the grounds of superior culture and racial stock, and these in turn justified the ruthless repression of oppositional elements. Luigi Preti attributes to the Fascist Party's official project of creating 'an imperialist and racist mentality', the unrestricted use of poison gas, summary executions and mass killings against civilians and guerillas in Ethiopia.⁴ Less expected, however, was the defence by American officials of the racial pretensions of Ethiopia's ruling class. One finds in the State Department files expressions of outrage by two successive American chargés d'affaires at Addis Ababa at the suggestion that Ethiopia was 'Negro'. Responding to an editorial published by the UNIA's *Negro World* (25 October 1930), Addison Southard wrote to Washington that 'the Ethiopians proper are not Negroes and will resent being so familiarly classified as such'.⁵ Four years later, his successor, W. Perry George, begins an equally testy review of an article which appeared in *Time* magazine (25 February 1935) with the observation: 'The Ethiopian nation is referred to as *negroid*. While there is a large negroid population in Ethiopia, the ruling class is scientifically and obviously *not* negroid. This is an error that *Time* appears to have fallen into along with the negro organs quoted in the same article.'⁶

Secondly, it was not 'Italy' which proposed the conquest of Ethiopia but *fascist* Italy: a reactionary coalition of political, economic and military interests which had seized the republican Italian state in the early 1920s. Furthermore, the official racist and fascist principles of the Italian state found sympathetic support among a group whose membership included British senior colonial officials (e.g., Sir Stewart Symes, governor of the Sudan) as well as peers of the realm (Sir Oswald Mosley), American captains of industry, finance and publishing, and the Catholic hierarchy on two continents. As Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Minister, noted while visiting Khartoum, there was reason to believe that shared racist attitudes transcended conflicts of national interest, that there was 'an unspoken, sometimes indeed an open complicity, between opposing white men, especially when there was a risk of native anarchy'.⁷ And Mussolini, according to the diaries of his son-in-law and Foreign Minister, Count Ciano, privately characterised America as a 'country of niggers and Jews, the forces which disintegrate civilization'.⁸

Just as large, however, were the imperatives of economic order:

During the 1920s business thought was shot through with an elitist distrust of the common man, an unchallenged belief in the

businessman's superior worth and leadership, and an obsession with the cult of efficiency and beneficence and 'progressive' character of the traditional capitalist system. Given these values, it was natural that Mussolini would emerge as the political personification of business genius.⁹

I have noted elsewhere, with the assistance of John Diggins' work, that:

In the early years, taking its leads from such financial stalwarts as Thomas Lamont (of J.P. Morgan's banking interests), Otto Kahn (of Kuhn, Loeb and Co., the investment house), Judge Elbert Gary (chairman of US Steel, a Morgan 'trust'), Henry Morgenthau and Julius Basche (Wall Street), the business press found much to its liking in the Fascist State: 'Favourable editorials could be read in publications such as *Barron's Journal of Commerce and Commercial Bulletin*, *Commerce and Finance*, *Nation's Business* ... and the reputable *Wall Street Journal*'. Less reputable, perhaps, but equally enthusiastic and influential were the William Randolph Hearst syndicate of newspapers, and the *Chicago Tribune* ... published by Colonel Robert McCormick (International Harvester), who doubled as Director of the Associated Press.¹⁰

The confrontation between Italy and Ethiopia thus encased imperialist, racist and economic concerns which resonated in Europe and North America. And the touch points of the diaspora and the crisis occurred along several fault lines: in attempts at the domination or colonisation of Haiti, Liberia and Ethiopia; the intensification of the competition between the Black Radical Tradition and western radical philosophy as the basic ideological structure of anti-racism and anti-imperialism within the diaspora; labour militancy and nationalist provocations of colonial authorities in British West Africa and the West Indies; and the civil theatre mounted by Italian and Black communities in the public halls, the streets and the press of America.

* * *

The forces against which Black mass protests in the African diaspora were mobilised in the Depression years were both several and formidable. This was no less the case when the immediate subject of Black objection was imperialism or fascism rather than more domesticated expressions of racism. The disparity, then, between the resources which could be husbanded by largely indigent Black communities and those of their foes was substantial. In consequence, the movements were often more romantic than practical – displays of solidarity rather than shows of strength. Nevertheless, mass Black protest could and did contribute to the further development of Black (and non-Black) activists.

In a sense, the successful invasion of Ethiopia in October 1935 by an Italian Army under a Fascist regime completed the colonisation of Africa begun by European powers in the late fifteenth century. Much had changed, however, in the intervening 400 years; so much, in fact, that it would be a great deception to see those successive centuries as the vessels for a sustained historical momentum. Indeed, the most significant factors played out in 1935 in the mountains and plateaux of Ethiopia had appeared within a much shorter historical space: the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In the midst of the general tumult of the expansion of the capitalist world-system by imperialist and colonialist instruments in the nineteenth century, three distinct Black political formations occurred, thus joining an already extant fourth. In the West Indies, a former slave colony, Haiti, won its freedom and for 120 years withstood the ambitions of commercial interests and foreign powers.¹¹ On the coast of West Africa, emigré colonies of former slaves – ‘creoles’ and Americo-Liberians as they came to be called – along with groups of indigenous peoples formed the social basis for Sierra Leone and Liberia.¹² For the better part of the century, Haiti, Sierra Leone and Liberia lurched towards variants of republican government (in decidedly different ways, paces and degrees) while the fourth society of interest to us here, Ethiopia, sustained its essentially imperial character. Indeed, by the end of the nineteenth century, the central imperial authority in Ethiopia was more secure than it had been since the mid-eighteenth century. After a succession of, at best, moderately successful emperors, Menelik II (1865-1915) had consolidated the empire while defeating the more expansive vision of Italian pretensions and ambitions. While the shadow of European colonialism passed over the bulk of the African continent, the Ethiopian state achieved by arms and statesmanship a measure of independence.¹³

More than 300 years before, an earlier European imperialism launched by Portugal, Spain and then the North Atlantic nations had systemically implicated African human and material resources in processes culminating in western industrialisation. One rather well-known nineteenth-century student of that relationship had put it succinctly:

Direct slavery is as much the pivot of our industrialism today as machinery, credit, etc. Without slavery no cotton; without cotton no modern industry. Slavery has given value to the colonies; the colonies have created world trade; world trade is the necessary condition of large-scale machine industry. Thus, before the traffic in Negroes began, the colonies supplied the Old World with only very few products and made no visible change in the face of the earth. Slavery is therefore an economic category of the highest importance.¹⁴

The consequences for Africa, particularly western and central Africa, had been catastrophic.¹⁵

However, imperialisms and colonialisms of the nineteenth century – the ‘new imperialism’ – were for the most part not agencies of industrialisation but of the capitalist world-system. Now the concern was for securing alternative markets; for acquiring labour sources to be pressed into service by force and or debt on the vast cash-crop plantations required to fill the demands of a world market; for human material to stock imperialist armies fielded against each other and on long-term pacification programmes; and for material and energy resources to help fuel industrial production at the core of the world-system.¹⁶ Adam Smith’s ‘previous accumulation’ and Marx’s ‘primitive accumulation’, the forms of surplus value extraction and appropriation associated with early capitalism and industrialisation, had given way to a hybrid system of capitalist accumulation.

From the end of the nineteenth century, the original core of the world-system had been augmented by the development of the United States, Germany, Italy and then Japan as industrialised societies.¹⁷ The US, with its vast territory, its poor but multiple agrarian labour and its seemingly spontaneous access to labour immigrating from Europe and Asia, initially focused its expansionist energies on territories proximate to its original colonies. By the end of the nineteenth century that colonisation was complete and the ‘continental’ US as it is currently constituted was established.

In the 1890s, the immense economic power of North America, like that of its forebears, assumed its first manifest form as political imperialism: the shell of the Spanish Empire was crushed and its overseas territories ceded to the United States. And then, following the First World War and the assumption of hegemony over the world-system, American interests, orchestrated by Harvey Firestone and Herbert Hoover (then Secretary of Commerce), prepared the ‘humanitarian’ grounds for reducing Liberia to a protectorate. Liberia, ruled by a ruthlessly exploitative and corrupt Americo-Liberian caste, would become a site for rubber production, thus relieving American manufacturers from a dependency on what had been a virtual British monopoly.¹⁸ The Liberian ‘labour scandal’ initiated by the US State Department in the summer of 1929 provided the means by which the Liberian ruling caste could be disciplined and the shoddy labour systems associated with American capital hidden behind the attention drawn by the League of Nations’ investigation.

It would seem that the motives traditionally adduced for the American diplomatic intervention that prompted the Liberian inquiry do not fully fit the case. Neither positing an American scheme to yoke Liberia with formal colonial status, nor asserting that the United States was moved by abstract humanitarianism, agrees with the facts ... An inquiry into Liberian conditions not only provided

the United States and its interests with an opportunity to disassociate themselves from embarrassment, but also promised to bludgeon the elite into a more cooperative attitude, while at the same time assuring American investment an adequate supply of labour.¹⁹

Neither the managers of the French and Spanish colonies involved nor those of Firestone's own plantation – and they all were purchasers of forced Liberian labour – were subject to censure in the League report.²⁰ But, important as corporate American interests were in influencing the character of the report and its general reception, we must also note the extent to which representatives of the Afro-American middle class were instruments of the strategy. And most prominent among them were Charles Johnson, the 'industrial sociologist' (as Azikiwe would refer to him) who served on the League investigative commission, and W.E.B. DuBois, whose involvement with Liberia went back to 1924 when he represented the American government at C.D.B. King's inauguration. As examples of elements of a Black intelligentsia willing to place themselves at the disposal of American economic interests, Johnson and DuBois were merely following their predecessors in Haiti.²¹ It was, however, such behaviour which drew sharp political and ideological lines within the Afro-American community. These came into play during the subsequent Italo-Ethiopian crisis.

In his 1934 study of the economic and political forces which culminated in the attack on Liberian sovereignty, the then young West African nationalist, Nnamdi Azikiwe, had made an angry observation on Black American elites:

The attitude of the Aframerican toward Liberia, as indicated in its press, is provoking ... The Aframerican has been so gullible that his hands have been used on several occasions to attempt a destruction of the Republic ... In the United States he has followed the tone of several unverified press reports to malign the Republic, and has gone far enough to advocate its demise. Its newspaper reports have been mostly of the 'yellow' type. On several occasions, a section of its press advocated a bloody revolution ...

No attempt will be made to explain this strange role of the Aframerican: to destroy every fabric of African political independence ... It is a pathetic case of a dog in the manger which will not or cannot eat hay, but can be used to prevent others from so doing.²²

In Haiti, at least for a time, that same elite had put itself to better purpose. From 1869 until 1913, the American diplomatic mission to Haiti had been dominated by this stratum. In 1869, President Grant had appointed Ebenezer Don Carlos Bassett to the post of resident minister and consul-general; in 1877, Hayes named John Mercer Langston (and

chargé d'affaires to Santo Domingo); there was then the short ministry (1885) of George Washington Williams, the author of *Negro Race in America from 1619 to 1880* and several military histories, followed by the appointment of John E.W. Thompson by Cleveland in 1885. In 1889, President Harrison gave the office to Frederick Augustus Bailey, who long before had relinquished this slave designation for one of his own choosing: Frederick Douglass. Douglass was succeeded by John Stephens Durham in 1891, but when Cleveland returned to the presidency, Henry Maxwell Smythe, a white, assumed the office. When the Republicans regained the presidency under McKinley in 1897, William Frank Powell resumed the line of Black ministers, but as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary. In 1905, Theodore Roosevelt chose Henry Watson Furness, the last of the line for the next half century.²³ Of their service, Padgett concluded: 'In comparing their records in the island with those of our white representatives we must conclude that their work has been as satisfactory as that of the white ministers and in several cases and in many specific instances superior.'²⁴ Woodrow Wilson, of course, had no patience for such sentiments; moreover, it was during his presidency that Haiti became a garrison occupied by American marines.

There were, however, other more influential Black leaders during this period whose ambitions, perceptions and public utterances gave confirmation to Azikiwe's bitter observations. John Blassingame, the historian, reports:

Booker T. Washington, Negro President of Tuskegee Institute, in a letter to the editor of *Outlook* in 1915, declared that while conditions in Haiti had compelled the United States to intervene, America should have explained 'to the Haitian people the benevolence of our intentions'. In carrying out these intentions, he suggested, first of all, that the United States send only those white men to Haiti who could work patiently with Negroes in a 'black man's country' without being domineering and without 'shooting civilisation' into them. Second, and most important, America should establish a Haitian system of elementary, agricultural, and industrial schools staffed largely by Negro college graduates.²⁵

But for Wilson, his naval and marine officers, their advisers in the National City Bank of New York, and an American public informed by most of the national press, the island was 'a horde of naked niggers', as the same *Outlook* put it in 1904.²⁶ And despite Booker Washington's self-serving vision, during Wilson's administrations, Hans Schmidt informs us, 'the American presence in Haiti was all white'.²⁷ The public construction of Haiti conformed to what was a 'proper' model for colonised Black 'natives' and their too ambitious 'elites'. The *Chicago Tribune* (5 September 1915) put the case simply: 'Haiti, as most

Americans know, is a rebellion called a republic.' And for many in the Black American middle-class generation coinciding with the occupation's nineteen years, this caricature served their ambitions. One recent student of the occupation, Brenda Gayle Plummer, concludes:

Aside from the handful of intellectuals who gloried in Haiti's revolutionary past and in the unique culture of its people, most blacks looked upon the occupation as a logical consequence of that country's chronic political turbulence. Others shuddered at the lurid accounts of voodoo that frequently appeared in the popular press.²⁸

A careful review of the evidence used to support this characterisation, however, soon reveals that the subject was really the Black middle class and its spokesmen and not the Black lower classes. Only the former could be implicated by the observation which follows concerning the 1920 election campaign: 'As Harding had used the Haitian issue to appeal to black voters for support, many blacks believed that he would democratise decisionmaking on Haiti to allow them to participate in running that country.'²⁹ The diplomatic administration of Haiti had never been a preserve of ordinary Blacks.

When W.E.B. DuBois opposed the seizure of Haiti in the pages of *The Crisis*, he did not speak for others in the NAACP executive nor did he reflect the interests of career State Department figures like Lemuel Livingston (thirty-two years as consul in Cap Haitien) who at first depicted the marines as 'benefactors'; or Booker T. Washington or Robert Russa Moton, who followed Washington as president of the Tuskegee Institute; or Napoleon Marshall, who accepted an appointment as clerk in the treaty administration (he had hoped for better from Harding but was vetoed by American 'banking interest').³⁰

On the other hand, the more militant mass organisation, the UNIA, whose membership contained an important fraction of West Indian immigrants to the US, denounced the occupation from the moment of its own inception and until the Haitian people were allowed to return to 'self-rule' in 1934. The Black nationalism of the UNIA had little room for accommodating the special interests displayed by Black established leadership. In its opposition, it was joined by other volunteer organisations reflecting ordinary Black opinion, like the Abyssinian Baptist Church of Harlem, the Harlem Refuge Church of Christ, the National Sunday School and Baptist Youth Progressive Union Congress, and groups associated with the American Communist Party.³¹ Inevitably, the established Black leadership was pushed from accommodation to protest and eventually into opposition. Eventually, the NAACP did oppose the American occupation of Haiti; and by 1932, during the Liberian debacle, it could reprimand the Department of State while proposing an acceptable Liberian resolution 'if the Department of State really wishes the independence and development of Liberia, and is not

seeking to do in Liberia the same sort of injustice which was done in Haiti at the behest of selfish banking and commercial organisations'.³²

Still, by the time the moderate race leaders had put opposition to the occupation of Haiti on their agenda, it had become clear to many Black Americans that the more responsible resistance to oppression would have to be generated from within their own ranks. The diffidence of leaders like Washington in the Haitian affair; the role of figures like DuBois in the opposition to and the destruction of the UNIA's organisation and programme; DuBois' collaboration with the War Department during the First World War (he had tried to get the NAACP executive to approve a War Department subsidy of his salary while serving as editor of *The Crisis*);³³ the collusion of Black leaders with the Liberian elite's use of forced labour, had all produced a deep resentment towards a stratum whose greed and self-deceptions led it to identifications with American imperialism at home and Black ruling-class oligarchies abroad. The Fascist Italian invasion of Ethiopia, then, came on the heel of a succession of events which had effectively alienated the mediating leadership strata of the Black middle class from the bulk of Black people.

In general, Afro-American culture fixed on Africa as the historical place of origin. But the more profound and pervasive mass consciousness was as an oppressed people. The vernacular of Black Christianity provided symbols of identification with the Biblical Hebrews or the designation Ethiopians. These psychological and cultural materials assumed great prominence in Afro-American culture and subsequently its intellectual traditions:

Black writing is replete with references to Ethiopia's legacy. The brilliant pan-Africanist Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912) called the Ethiopians of antiquity 'the most creditable of ancient peoples' and claimed that they had achieved 'the highest rank of knowledge and civilization.' J.A. Rogers [who was to serve as a correspondent in Ethiopia in 1935-6], the lecturer, columnist, traveler, and chronicler of Negro achievements, asserted categorically that the Ethiopian royal family was the 'most ancient lineage in the world'. He maintained further that at least eighteen rulers of ancient Egypt were 'unmixed' Negroes or Ethiopians. And W.E.B. DuBois wrote of Ethiopia as the 'sunrise of human culture' and the 'cradle of Egyptian civilization'.³⁴

'Ethiopia', confluent with the notion of Africa, became a most ancient point of reference – a term signifying historicity and racial dignity in ways the term 'Negro' could not match. Since the same symbolic complex appeared in the spiritual traditions of Afro-West Indians, it is understandable that the strength and significance of Ethiopia would grow when Afro-American and Afro-West Indian militant conjoined.

Such was true of the UNIA, whose organisational and ideological character reflected its West Indian origins and its North American experience. The UNIA's 'anthem of the Negro race' was 'Ethiopia, Thou Land of Our Fathers'. Similar sentiments of identification were expressed during the crisis by East Africans like Jomo Kenyatta: 'the sole remaining pride of Africans and Negroes in all parts of the world'; and West Africans like Daniel Thwaite: 'the shrine enclosing the last sacred spark of African political freedom, the impregnable rock of black resistance against white invasion, a living symbol, an incarnation of African independence'.³⁵

The global character of the Black response to the invasion of Ethiopia provides a support for the interpretation that it was largely spontaneous. In the US as the crisis emerged from late 1934, Black-led aid organisations proliferated: in December 1934, Leo Hansberry and Ralph Bunche of Howard University initiated the Ethiopian Research Council. In February of the next year, Willis Huggins, the historian, inaugurated the Provisional Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia, and then, in July, the Friends of Ethiopia. In September 1935, a group composed of thirty Black physicians, dentists, pharmacists, nurses and technicians, pulled together by J.J. Jones, P.M.H. Savory and Arnold Donawa (who two years later would serve with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain),³⁶ formed the Medical Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia and shipped two tons of medical and surgical supplies to Ethiopia. In November, with the war a month old, Hansberry, with the aid of Mordecai Johnson, the president of Howard University, transformed the Ethiopian Research Council into the Ethiopian Emergency Medical Aid. And in December, the United Aid for Ethiopia was organised under the direction of Lij Tasfaye Zaphiro, the private secretary of the Ethiopian minister in London, with funds collected from Black congregations in Harlem, Brooklyn, Chicago and other supporters.³⁷ Most of these organisations were headquartered in New York, where they were under constant surveillance by State Department special agents like A.R. Burr. Ironically, the one Washington-based organisation, the Ethiopian Research Council, seems for a time to have been a complete mystery to the State Department. When an American official in Addis Ababa requested information on the organisation in late 1935, the Department had to rely on information obtained by a representative of the American Red Cross through John Shaw, 'an English-born American citizen', serving as Ethiopian consul-general in New York. Shaw had 'some literature issued by the Research Council which had given an address in the colored residential section of Washington. He suggested that we might advise [Addis Ababa] that preliminary informal reports indicated that the Ethiopian Research Council was a Negro organization and one of numerous small inactive and probably inadequately financed groups which proposed to engage

in relief work on behalf of Ethiopia'.³⁸

Other organisations and private individuals, however, assumed a more martial spirit. The State Department files from the summer of 1935 until the seizure of Addis Ababa in the spring of 1936 are filled with petitions from volunteers who proposed to fight in Ethiopia. The organisations recorded are the Pan-African Reconstruction Association, the International African Progressive Association, the Detroit Committee for the Aid of Ethiopia and the Association for Ethiopian Independence.³⁹ Mass rallies and support activities were reported in Chicago (the Negro World Alliance), New York (the Provisional Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia), Miami (the Ethiopian Relief League); Fort Worth, Okmulgee (Oklahoma), Washington, D.C., and Mobile (Friends of Ethiopia).⁴⁰ Letters of outrage to Black newspapers like the *Chicago Defender*, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the *Amsterdam News* and the *Baltimore Afro-American* were penned by Black men and women from all over the nation.

Elsewhere a hundred Liberian, Ovambo and Karro dockworkers in Southwest Africa refused to work on Italian ships. In Kenya, the Kikuyu Central Association enlisted volunteers for the campaign in Ethiopia. Egyptian doctors reported to Addis Ababa. And hundreds of West Indians from British Guiana, Cuba and Trinidad to the Bahamas requested permission from their colonial authorities to enlist in the armies of Ethiopia.⁴¹ In London, African and West Indian intellectuals, workers and students, despite reservations about the Emperor's rule and his racial misconceptions, organised public demonstrations in order to pressure the British government into support of Ethiopia.⁴²

In Chicago, where the Black community closely followed the adventures in Ethiopia of volunteers like West Indian pilot Hubert Julian and their own aviator, John C. Robinson, the invasion similarly erased any concerns about the Emperor. St Clair Drake and Horace Clayton recorded in their classic work on Chicago, *Black Metropolis*, that:

Haile Selassie became something of a hero to Negroes all over America. A resident of Black Metropolis [Robinson] journeyed to Addis Ababa to become the pilot of the royal family's personal airplane; his exploits were followed with interest . . . and in a confused, semi-superstitious sort of way people in Black Metropolis were given to prophesying that those who had sold Ethiopia out would eventually find themselves menaced by the Fascists.⁴³

And three months before the actual hostilities, the mass enthusiasm for enlistment in the defence of Ethiopia was such that Robert Abbott, the publisher of the *Chicago Defender*, found it necessary to publicly oppose such efforts:

Don't do it, young men and women. There is too much for you to do

at home! You in Dallas, Tex., who are enlisting to fight for Ethiopian independence – do you think you have independence at home? You in Miami, Fla., who in fiery words declare that Ethiopia must be kept free – do you think you are free? You, in New York and in Chicago, who have worked yourselves into a frenzy over the plight of Haile Selassie and his empire in Northern (sic) Africa – do you suppose your conditions are any better than those of the warriors of Ethiopia?

If you think these things, you think without reason.⁴⁴

The reply to Abbott was soon in coming. Mrs Wimley Thompson in Gallop, New Mexico, wrote to Abbott with quiet dignity:

One must remember that we didn't come into this country on our own accord, so why should we battle for something we will never receive? Justice. Ethiopia is our country and as long as there is blood in our veins we should love and respect it as such ... Let every heart within a black man's body be with Ethiopia, the country which is ours ...⁴⁵

Hers was a voice of the African diaspora. And when Ethiopia was fallen, it was this spirit which ordinary Black workers like James Yates, Black medical workers like Arnold Donawa and Salaria Kees, and Black Communist leaders like Harry Haywood took to Spain. As Yates told me:

We didn't get a chance to go to Ethiopia much as many of us would have liked to have gone. But when Ethiopia was invaded and Italy overran it, those same troops left there and went to Spain. This was a time and a chance for especially the Blacks to volunteer and get back at the fascists that had invaded Ethiopia.⁴⁶

More than a hundred Afro-Americans found their way to the Spanish Civil War. But that is another story, another chapter of the African diaspora's response to fascism.

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- 42 See T. Ras Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism From Within* (1973), pp. 75ff; and Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism* (1984), pp. 369ff. The question of the Emperor's racial consciousness was still a question for the young Nigerian nationalist, Chief Hezekia Oladipo Davies, when in 1936 the Emperor came to exile in England. Chief Davies interviewed the Emperor, questioning him on the rumours of a colour bar and slavery in Ethiopia: 'the Emperor dismissed the allegations as an Italian fabrication. He affirmed, however, that the Ethiopians were not, and did not regard themselves as Africans (or Negroes) as they were "a mixed Hamito-semitic people".' Asante, op. cit., p. 60.
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Contemporary Marxism

Edited by
Marlene Dixon

Journal of the
Institute for
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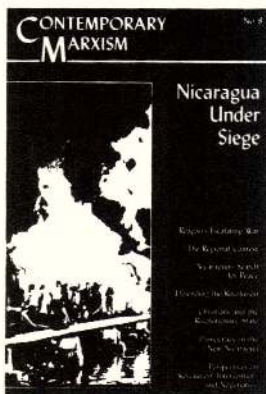
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Notes and documents

Report from Nairobi: the UN Decade for Women Forum

‘Women should not be discussing politics but only the issues specifically related to women’! This was the slogan of the US delegates and their allies in the run up to the 3rd and final UN Decade for Women Conference and the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Forum held in Nairobi, Kenya, this summer. The theme of the Conference – as of the Decade – was ‘Equality, development and peace’, but it was ‘development issues’ that the US was particularly enthusiastic to promote. While government representatives (women and men) met in the prestigious Kenyatta Conference Centre to reach agreement on the final Decade document, entitled ‘Forward looking strategies’, the alternative Forum at the Nairobi University brought together an enormous gathering of 14,000 women (and some men) from all over the world. The participants came from national liberation organisations and movements such as SWAPO, PLO, ANC, FLNKS, Eritrea and East Timor; from black women’s groups, refugee and migrant groups, indigenous peoples organisations, aid and development agencies, peace movements, lesbian groups and christian organisations. This was a forum for meeting together, discussing, exchanging ideas, learning and making contacts for future work. It was not a formal conference and had no official relationship with the nearby UN meeting, nor had it any influence in the shaping of the final documents that the government delegates were laboriously plodding through. Nevertheless, the Forum was the more important of the two in that many of the women there represented grass roots organisations, and were the people who were fighting for their rights as women, as black people, as the working class and the oppressed. They were people in struggle; they represented international realities.

Attempts had been made to prevent the Forum being held as the US feared (rightly as it turned out) that it could become a platform for attacking US policies. Having failed to stop it going ahead, organisational sabotage was employed to ensure that minimum numbers of women were able to find their way through the bureaucracy to register and raise funds to get to Kenya. The Kenyan government had been instructed to use hotel space allocations to keep the number of potential troublemakers down and to exercise strict controls on entry visas. SWAPO delegates had difficulty getting into the country. Other women were stopped from leaving their own countries, such as Palestinian women from the Israeli occupied territories (among them Samiha Khalil and Amal Wahadan) who were refused travel permits and are now under house arrest. Despite this, women mobilised to get to Kenya in the last few months, having heard that the US was trying to hijack the Forum. For example, SWAPO Women's Council in Angola urged their supporters to attend because the US was planning to send around 2,000 delegates and participants in an attempt to stop important political issues such as the struggle for Namibian independence being discussed. At the opening ceremony, the organisers admitted that they had been shocked at the response. Up to the official closing date for registration in April, only 2,000 women had registered! Other organisational methods were employed to limit and isolate the debate – on Apartheid in Namibia and South Africa and on Zionism, in particular. Over 1,000 workshops took place and it would be interesting to know what the priorities were over allocation of rooms and times – many important workshops were given tiny rooms. SWAPO Women's Council was given a room to accommodate twenty people – over 600 turned up for their workshop and they were forced to occupy a large empty hall next door! Many women held workshops in the open as a result.

The Forum's main focus was whether 'women's issues' should be seen as separate from the struggles against US and western imperialism, against apartheid and racism, against colonialism and neo-colonialism – 'politics'. Women from the Pacific talked about the years of nuclear war that have been inflicted on their people by western governments testing the latest bombs; the Kanak people are fighting for independence from French colonialism, the Aboriginal peoples of Australia and New Zealand for self-determination, for basic human rights and for their land rights in the face of gross exploitation by the mining companies. In Central America, the indigenous peoples face a difficult task in a region dominated by US aggression and exploitation. Indigenous Indian women from Nicaragua spoke of their support and defence of the revolution but regretted that their marginalisation in the revolution and the fact that the specific discrimination they face had not been recognised sooner by the Sandinistas, had enabled the US cynically to recruit their people to the side of the counter-revolutionary forces. The

Guatemalan Junta, with technical aid and expertise from Israel, are practising wholesale genocide on the indigenous Indians (80% of the population) in an attempt to expropriate their land for multinational companies. Women face additional oppression throughout the 'Third World' in the attacks on their fundamental right to control their own bodies. Widespread drug experimentation, in particular of contraceptive drugs, and mass forced sterilisations are taking place under the cover of medical research and population control. Namibian women spoke about the massive repression going on inside Namibia, a colony of South Africa, and how women, particularly in the north, bear the brunt of this in the brutal attacks and rapes by security forces. SWAPO women emphasised that their fight as women for equality could not be isolated from the liberation struggle for an independent Namibia. They are involved in the armed struggle as the only course of action open to them to rid themselves of racist colonial rule in their country. Together with the ANC of South Africa, they spoke on many panels and received enormous support at the Forum.

This was the triumph of the Forum, that at last at an international women's meeting, the liberation movements, black women, women from all over the Third World were in the majority and were the stronger. In many workshops women were told not to speak about politics, but they wouldn't be silenced. One SWAPO woman reported that in a workshop on prisons they would not let her talk about her experiences in South African prisons – the American women running the workshop wanted to discuss social work within prisons, rather than to confront why prisons exist in the first place and who are imprisoned.

As the Forum progressed, it was around the question of Palestine that the most heated debates took place. To gain credibility, the Zionists (from Israel, the US and Europe) continually insisted that 'Zionism is the national liberation movement of the Jews' and that any criticism of Israel (in relation to Palestine and its international counter-revolutionary policies) was tantamount to anti-semitism. They enlisted black women from the US to say that the oppression of Jews was the same as the oppression against blacks, and while some of the 'left' Zionists did have dialogues with Palestinian women, others refused to acknowledge the existence of Palestinians. It was clear that the terms of the debate hadn't moved forward since the last Forum in 1975; but all the same, support for the Palestinians and Lebanese had increased since the 1982 Israeli invasion. Many women felt that they had every right to criticise Israel, in the same way that they criticised the US, Britain and South Africa for their racist, colonial policies, and there were Jewish women who were speaking up in support of the Palestinians.

An important aspect of the Forum was the heavy presence of security forces. Armed uniformed police patrolled the campus and dormitories where Forum delegates were staying; outside every hotel and Forum

venue security checks were made and police hung around outside many of the workshops. Plainclothes security police were always present inside the 'political' workshops, looking very conspicuous in suits with small triangle badges attached. After women gave contributions in open debates in the Peace Tent, for example, they would be pounced on and asked 'what's your name, that was an interesting speech, do you have it written down, and where are you from'? In the West Papuan workshop, Indonesian security police got inside and photographed everyone. An Iranian male tried to attack physically an Iranian woman who was speaking out against Khomeini's regime. Many women, particularly those from the liberation movements, were continually being photographed by people who looked neither like photographers nor Forum participants. All of this gave cause for alarm, and although it did not silence women about their own struggles, it made many very reluctant to speak out about what was happening in Kenya itself. Informed sources told us that students who were acting as officials in the Forum were told to sit in workshops, listen to conversations, take notes and report back. There was much Kenyan government interference in the Forum, from evicting participants from their hotels to make way for official UN delegates; to trying to close the Peace Tent down (as women were discussing armed struggle). All the films for Filmforum were seized (it was insisted they had to pass through the censor) and the programme was completely ruined as a result. Permission was refused for a march from the Forum to the UN Conference, but then that was not surprising since demonstrations are banned in Kenya anyway. The authorities were perhaps becoming ruffled by what was happening at the University, where apart from the discussions, daily exhibitions were shown of struggles such as that for the independence of Western Sahara, that of SWAPO of Namibia, of the ANC, and the PLO. There were too photomontages of the horrific wars going on in Iran and Iraq, the occupation of the Lebanon and the effects of the invasion, and stalls displaying material on issues like prostitution-tourism in Indonesia.

The security seemed to be geared on two levels. Firstly, it was aimed at keeping Kenyans away from the campus and keeping us away from the Kenyans; secondly, international security forces were watching and marking out those radical women who could be dealt with on their return home, particularly those from inside South Africa, Namibia, Palestine, Lebanon and Iran etc. For this, Kenya was an ideal place to hold such a Forum – as a neo-colonialist state controlled by the US, Britain and Israel it has an open door policy of allowing these governments and others to operate quite freely inside. At the political level, given the US insistence that development issues should be the focus of debate, it would seem that Kenya was chosen as a model example of development programmes in an 'independent' African state. Forum participants were encouraged to go on government sponsored tours of

rural women's projects and attend lavish receptions given by Kenyan women's organisations. Masai women were brought in from their villages and literally dumped on the campus to provide an added attraction to the western visitors. Kenyan women who participated in the Forum were encouraged to attend sessions on family planning every day: according to their government the economic crisis is due to the rising birth rate and therefore all women's fault. Kenyan women were given a briefing by President Moi before the Forum in which he advised them not to concern themselves with issues that were not relevant to themselves (politics?).

The police and security presence did have a positive effect – they alerted many women to the fact that Kenya was not the 'democratic' country many had been told about. Word spread through the campus, albeit quietly, about what was going on outside the Forum. Prostitutes and the dispossessed poor had been bussed out of Nairobi in a big clean up of the city before we arrived, to give a good impression of what US and western money could do for Africa. We were told of the rural poverty and starvation, the conditions of workers in the multi-national companies and the squatters' towns around Nairobi; of Langata women's prison, said to be worse than any of the men's prisons; of the forced sterilisations of women in the rural areas and the widespread use of depo-provera; of the casual murders of prostitutes by US servicemen from the US naval base of Mombasa. The heavy political repression has led to vicious attacks on students at the university in recent months (at least 14 died and over 100 were injured, many seriously, when police attacked a student prayer meeting in February). There is the continuing imprisonment of many university students and Maina wa Kinyatti, the historian of Mau Mau, and while the Forum was in progress, 12 of the Air Force men detained in connection with the 1982 attempted coup were secretly hanged in prison.

Having the Forum in a country like Kenya may not have been ideal for an international women's conference in terms of freedom of speech and movement, but it did bring home to many of us from the West that this is the daily reality for millions of women and men. Indeed, it was clear to us in the discussions in the SWAPO Women's Solidarity Campaign workshops that one of the central tasks of women here in Britain is to mobilise around anti-racism and anti-imperialism, to fight the capitalist system that profits in and sustains apartheid in South Africa, colonialism in Namibia, oppresses black people and the working class here, prevents countries like Kenya from achieving real independence and is at the same time oppressing us as women. Our struggle for women's liberation cannot be separated nor seen in isolation from the class and race struggle, and that was the main lesson learnt in Nairobi.

SWAPO Women's Solidarity Campaign
London

Ros Young

UK commentary*

Blacks and the Black Sections

The continuing failure of the Labour Party to nominate black candidates for Parliament has led to the demand by some of its black members for special 'Black Sections' to represent black interests. The suggestion has been denounced as 'repellent' by the Labour leadership, and as 'divisive of the class' by a section of the Left. On the eve of the Labour Party Conference, the Campaign Against Racism and Fascism asked A. Sivanandan for a race/class perspective on the subject. The interview which follows was taken from Searchlight, October 1985.

Q: The issue of Black Sections is likely to come up again at the next Labour Party Conference. A lot of anti-racists and Left socialists are confused about what position to take vis-à-vis Black Sections, whether the demand is progressive, anti-racist and so on.

A: Yes, there is confusion and I believe that it stems from the fact that there are actually two perspectives we have to understand: that of the Labour Party and that of the black movement. Black Sections belong in the Labour Party, not to the black movement. They belong in the Labour Party precisely because the Labour movement had failed firstly to support the struggles of working-class blacks and then to incorporate the history of that struggle within their own history and traditions. Black Sections were thrown up by and a response to that failure. If the Labour Party wants now to be seen to be taking an anti-racist stance (and, make no mistake, the Labour Party has proved itself to be a thoroughly racist party) 'Black Sections' is the easy option and Kinnock is a fool not to see it.

Secondly, if the Labour Party prides itself on being a broad church, a federation of interests, why is there no room for Black Sections? They are no more outlandish than Women's Sections – and I bet they will be just as ineffective in getting anything done for the working-class. 'Black Sections', you must understand, is not a radical demand. It is Kinnock's refusal to entertain the notion that gives it an aura of radicalism.

Q: But why do you say Black Sections don't belong in the black movement?

A: Because they have not been thrown up by black people in the course of black struggle, they are not organic to black working-class struggle. They are, instead, the demand of a handful of aspiring middle-class blacks who, finding their way to the top of the Labour hierarchy

* At the request of our British readership we are recommencing UK commentary.

blocked by racist structures, first set up their own parallel organisations and cabals within the trade union set-up – such as the Black Trade Union Solidarity Movement and Black Media Workers' Association – before graduating as Black Sections into the Labour Party set-up. They do not come out of the struggles of ordinary black people in the inner cities – and they do not relate to them – but they have attached themselves to black struggles, like limpets, the more readily to gain office. And, because they have – by virtue of their education and class background – a knowledge of how the system works and are familiar with Labour Party structures and bureaucracy, they are able to come up with a technical, constitutional 'black' position. They know the machinery – and they know how to make it work for them. That makes them machine politicians, not grass-roots politicians.

Do you know the kind of demands the Black Sections are making – representation on the NEC, demands that constituency parties only select black candidates and so on? You know what it reminds me of – the reserved seats in the Executive and Legislative Council system in the British Colonies. They are not people prepared for the hard graft at the community level – the proving of themselves on the ground by serving the people. They are after some short-cuts to power – and they are appropriating black history to justify that short-cut. But of course they are no different from their counterparts in the upper echelons of the (white) Labour Party and Trade Unions.

Q: But couldn't it be argued that if the Black Sections were in the Labour Party, they could help transform it, make it less racist for example?

A: Transform it? No. Less racist? Perhaps – but only in terms of the discrimination faced by middle-class blacks – in the matter of jobs, promotions, economic mobility, social acceptance. And don't tell me that to aid them would be to aid blacks lower down the scale. That would be to subscribe to the IMF/World Bank 'trickle down' theory that aid given to Third World bourgeoisies gradually finds its way down to the people. Black Sections will neither 'blacken' the Labour Party nor benefit the black working class. And the changes they can make from within will be cosmetic. Worse, it will change not the Labour Party but black politics, by drawing away black expertise from where it is needed most – in the ghettos.

Q: Are you actually saying that there are now different forms of racism facing different sections of the black community?

A: Yes, of course. Not to say that would be to equate 'Black Sections' with black struggle – that would be to ignore the class stratification that has taken place in the black community. There is no such thing as a black-qua-black movement any more. There are middle-class blacks

fighting for a place in the (white) middle-class sun and there are workless and working-class blacks fighting for survival and basic freedoms.

Black Sections, in fact, are a distraction from the main issues facing ordinary black people – most importantly, the tremendous increase in racial attacks, arson and murder, the impunity with which these are carried out and the failure of the police even to acknowledge them as racial attacks, let alone their failure to bring the culprits to book. And then when the people set up their own organisations to defend themselves, they are penalised and outlawed by the courts – and left defenceless. My point is not just that Black Sections don't relate to this, but, worse, that they have changed the terms of debate about racism. Black Sections are what the media want to concentrate on when it ought to be discussing the resurgence of fascist groups, which is much worse than it was in the 1970s – only now it is hidden from view, it affects mostly the black communities; it does not affect the electoral chances of the Labour or Tory parties as it did in the local and general elections in the 1970s. And that also explains why there is no Anti Nazi League today. The nazis are not trying to win seats any more, they are altering whole areas of working-class culture – and where is the Left in all this, where are the Black Sections? In a society polarised into classes by Thatcherite monetarism, the Left and anti-racists have to choose which type of racism they want to deal with – the Black Sections' middle-class concerns or the fundamental issues of life and liberty that confront the black working class.

Q: Your view on Black Sections, as on Racism Awareness Training, is quite controversial, though always with a race/class perspective. Could you clarify for us the relationship you see between black struggle and working-class struggle?

A: Firstly, working-class blacks bring a tradition of community politics which can enrich the Labour movement and the Labour Party. It was that same tradition that brought massive black support to the miners' struggles and it was not an accident that the miners were fighting for their communities too. It was ordinary black people you saw taking food, clothing, money to the miners' pickets, not the Black Sections. Secondly, it is the rumpus about Black Sections that has thrown up black candidates in a number of constituencies – not the needs of the black community, not their 'nominees' if you like, not candidates who will necessarily represent their interests. That will come, in the course of struggle, and then we can expect it to radicalise Labour politics. But 'Black Sections' is a hybrid, looking for its legitimacy to the struggles of black people and for its habitation and name to the Labour Party. It has no life of its own, it's a pastiche, it's disorganic.

Book reviews

Political science looks at Turkey

The Political and Economic Development of Modern Turkey

By WILLIAM HALE (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1981). 279 pp. \$32.50.

The Modernization of Turkey from Ataturk to the Present Day

By WALTER F. WEIKER (New York and London, Holmes & Meier, 1981). 303 pp. \$37.50.

Democracy and Development in Turkey

By CLEMENT H. DODD (Walkington, North Humberside, The Eothen Press, 1979, distributed in the US by Humanities Press). 231 pp. \$23.50 cloth, \$12.50 paper.

The rise and fall of the 'Turkish Miracle' continues to command the attention of Middle East scholars and social scientists alike. The majority of publications of recent years were generated by mainstream political science and were highly varied in their scope, quality and perceptivity. Of these, three books are representative of the way social scientists deal with Third World countries, and revealing of the continued domination of modernisation theorists in the 1980s: William Hale's book which weighs towards economics, C.H. Dodd's which weighs towards politics, and Walter Weiker's which weighs more or less evenly towards both.¹

Hale: development

Hale's *The Political and Economic Development of Modern Turkey* sets out 'with a simple and primarily descriptive purpose – to outline the evolution of policy and the course of Turkey's economic development since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923.' This is to be pursued in the context of Turkey's political development since 'the political

milieu has been of fundamental importance in determining the shape of the economy'. Whether this is intended as a profession of faith, setting down methodological tenets and thereby rejecting any orientation towards economic determinism, is unclear. In any case, the book suffers acutely from excessive ambition, and in its attempts to cover a multitude of topics in about 250 pages of text, ends up providing little more than the most superficial treatment of too many important issues. It is the kind of book that will bore those already familiar with the subject and puzzle those for whom it is entirely new.

For instance, the first two chapters, on 'Natural resources and obstacles' and 'Human resources and population trends', read like term papers; they are too short and cover too vast topics to provide more than the most superficial generalities. Similarly, education takes up a total of five pages (spread out over no less than three sections), and political developments, including the military take-overs of 1960, 1971 and 1980, cover no more than four-and-a-half pages!

After reviewing the country's resources, Hale gives the political background by discussing the experiment in liberalism during the 1920s, the étatist policies of the monopoly period, and the Democrat Party (DP) decade. Too often, oversimplifications substitute for careful analysis. The reopening to liberalism in 1946 is a case in point: it is explained by 'the need to demonstrate to the western powers that Turkey had a moral claim to their assistance' and the 'domestic discontent at years of heavy-handed single-party government'. No doubt these did contribute to the dissolution of the stern rule of the Republican People's Party (RPP). Yet, one would expect a book concentrating on the Turkish economy to delve into some of the economic dimensions of this transition. These include the collapse, after the defeat of the Third Reich, of Turkey's heavily German-dependent foreign trade, the policy of overvaluing the currency which made an opening to the world market all but impossible, the widespread shortages and resulting rampant black market, the high rate of inflation and, most important, the role of the bourgeoisie.

The étatist policies of the Kemalist administration were not entirely self-serving. Their objective was first and foremost to assist the development of a national bourgeoisie, and their success at the same time brought about the demise of the 'above-class' alliance which had constituted the base of the RPP. As Çağlar Keyder writes, the years 'of étatist policy, and the period of war economy, had been successful in creating an *economic* force which now struggled to attain autonomy from the close control of the political authority'.² This new force found its articulation in the Democrat Party. Thus, it was the specific concurrence of an international conjuncture in which the United States had emerged from the Second World War as a hegemonic power, and a whole array of domestic political and economic pressures, that led to

Inönü's overture to multiparty democracy and economic liberalisation. But perhaps such an explanation has no place in a book which so studiously avoids even the most remotely marxist-sounding terminology.

The third section, comprising the bulk of the text, reviews economic policies and developments since 1960: national income, planning, fiscal policies, the economy by sectors, labour and foreign economic relations. The discussion is somewhat more detailed here, but some problems remain. On the subject of the Convertible Deposits,³ for instance, Hale writes that in 1973, 'the government stepped in to restrict this borrowing, only to recommence it two years later, as the need for credit grew. By 1978 ... the authorities again acted to freeze' the practice. There is no mention of the fact that the governments in question were different. The Convertible Deposits were initiated by a Justice Party (JP) government in 1967, abolished by the RPP in 1973, restarted by the JP-led coalition in 1975, and finally ended by the RPP in 1978. By then, the debt due to these deposits alone amounted to \$2.97 billion.⁴ In so far as this history reflects the political dimensions of this policy, which, as Hale points out, 'became a channel for borrowing by Turkish firms in European money markets', its omission is of considerable importance.

The publisher's blurb on the book's jacket announces that 'it comes right up to date, including discussion of the 1980 coup', and, indeed, some measure of discussion of both the coup and the 1980 'stabilisation' programme, is present. However, such crucial information as the index of real wages only goes up to 1977, showing a steady rise beginning with the return to democracy in 1973. Yet, it was after 1977 that this trend was reversed, and real wages fell sharply. By writing that 'as prices have risen, unionised workers have gained commensurate wage increases, giving an impetus to further price hikes', Hale reiterates the oft-repeated justification for the various wage control measures sought by the JP government, and finally implemented after the coup. It is highly questionable that the working class is responsible for the overconsumption that fuels inflation in Turkey, but beyond that, the drop in real wages observed after 1977 gives the lie to this claim. By neglecting to mention it, the book presents only a partial, indeed misleading, picture.

Weiker: modernisation

Walter Weiker's *The Modernisation of Turkey* appears at first sight to be a more serious undertaking. Covering a broad spectrum of topics ranging from the modernisation of elites and the masses, social groups and forces, political parties and education, to economic development and the organisation of government, it offers a survey of the literature, both in Turkish and in English. Since it leans mostly towards secondary sources, the value of the book lies in providing a review and occasional reinterpretation of facts and figures from the general perspective of modernisation theory.

Unfortunately, in the final analysis, 'modernity' becomes synonymous with the measure in which a given social formation is 'like' contemporary western advanced capitalist societies. Certainly not all applications of modernisation theory view human development as a linear and inevitable path linking the traditional ('bad') with the modern ('good'), and Weiker's is relatively more sober. Yet, this is not enough to spare readers such platitudes as 'one of the significant strengths of Turkish development is that to date the "followers" [i.e., non-elites] simultaneously display "modern" and "traditional" characteristics, that they are at once "stable" and "in motion"'. In so far as all social aggregates are in some form of flux, passing from one state to another, such propositions have little value. Analyses of the diachronic elements of such flux, however, investigating in particular both how and why specific changes take place and the timing with which they occur, are liable to provide substantial insights – especially if the directions of these changes are not taken for granted as predetermined by the *deus ex machina* of modernisation.

A weakness of Weiker's exposition is that it is not sufficiently analytical. He is concerned far too much with investigating *how* this or that aspect of recent Turkish history contributes to the inexorable process of modernisation, at the cost of neglecting *why* a certain course of events took place, what alternatives if any were available, and what causal relations can be established between it and everything else that is known.

To such an extent does the effort to situate everything within this particular context permeate the book, that the discussion of each topic invariably contains an assessment of the place it holds in Turkey's modernisation. A case in point is the section on 'Communications'. The text states that 'whether Turkish cinema today can be called harmful to Turkish development is not an easy question [to] answer'. Considering the multitude of factors at play in the development of Turkey, one wonders if the question ever deserved to be asked. Later, the author discusses the role of music in Turkey's development, concluding that 'in social terms', a certain genre '*probably* performs little more than an entertainment function. Indirectly, however, *it is quite possible* that it strengthens identification of urban Turkish youth with their Western counterparts. It *may* also help inculcate a desire for a more "glamorous" life ...' etc., etc. (emphasis added). Does so much speculation really belong here? This is not to underestimate the importance of analysing culture, but clearly, at least some evidence is in order if the whole exercise is not to descend into speculation.

One is left with little choice but to conclude that that is precisely what is happening. The density of the language, the eclecticism of the quoted material, and what might be called the reference fetishism that runs through the book also obscure its point of view – if, indeed, there is

one. The general rosy picture of Turkey that is presented, often via unidentified 'observers', and the absence of in-depth discussion of alternative perspectives, makes the book scarcely more than an 'area handbook', and a rather weak one at that.

Dodd: institutional history

C.H. Dodd's *Democracy and Development in Turkey* is 'an expanded version of lectures given to first year students in the University of Hull'. While some sections perhaps gloss over certain topics somewhat hastily, the book is perceptive. Even readers who do not share the author's relatively conservative politics will find it useful and educational. Starting with a brief historical review, the book successively analyses the Ottoman heritage, the political elites and culture, the constitutional framework, the political parties, military, bureaucracy and pressure groups, concluding with a general assessment of Turkey's democracy.

Dodd's analysis is, however, marred by observations that post-Said 'orientals' are bound to find irritating, to say the least. In discussing the coup of 1960, for instance, he states that it 'was a serious business. The Turkish mentality does not lend itself to light opera.' Elsewhere, he writes 'a mitigating factor, however, and perhaps also of Ottoman origin, is the apparent capacity of Turks to shrug off the misfortune of a fall from favour and to wait philosophically for fortune's wheel to turn'. As a caveat to the interpretation of the results of a survey, he cautions the reader that 'it is often said to be a traditionally Turkish trait to give the expected reply'.

It is not always sufficiently appreciated that Turkish society has been extremely dynamic during recent decades, so that considerable amounts of diligently collected and valuable data no longer adequately reflect the realities of the country. This is particularly true of the last decade, and Dodd's occasional use of some obsolete data has made some of his conclusions invalid, though no doubt valuable as historical commentary. For instance, in analysing voting patterns, he quotes from the attitudes of the electorate as surveyed in 1969. There is no doubt that some of the factors he mentions, such as the fact that the JP was the heir to the DP or that the RPP was the party of Atatürk and İnönü, are all but negligible nowadays: it would be hard to imagine that given the degree of politicisation that Turkey experienced since 1975, such factors could still play a role. Similarly, the truth of the claim that 'Alevi Turks prefer communal solidarity represented by adherence to a small party', referring no doubt to the Unity Party of Turkey, is debatable in view of the massive support extended by Alawites to the RPP during the 1977 elections.

The bureaucracy is another area where fundamental changes have occurred during the last decade. While political favouritism and partisanship always played a role in Turkish government, the RPP-National

Salvation Party (NSP) coalition (1974) took it to new heights. And although the RPP made its share of partisan appointments, it was the NSP that initiated the practice of the wholesale colonisation of entire ministries. Subsequent governments institutionalised the practice so that each cabinet change came to be followed by what the public referred to as *memur kıyımı* – massacre of functionaries. During the Nationalist Front governments (1975-7), ministries were parcelled out in order to hold together precarious coalitions of parties which had nothing in common save an interest in keeping the RPP out of office. The self-styled ‘key parties’ of the extreme right wrung key ministries: these became instruments for the extraction of party ‘contributions’, as well as vehicles for the infiltration of the bureaucracy from under-secretaries to janitors, and on down to provincial levels.

After 1950, Dodd writes, ‘the Kemalist unity which itself resolved a bitter and debilitating dogfight within the Turkish elite, has been fractured. No integrated elite offers discipline and direction to Turkish society today’. It is ideology, not the elite, that cements a society together and gives it a direction. Turkey’s ideological crisis during the last two decades is a subject too broad to be adequately covered here. But Dodd’s observation has profound consequences which should not be neglected. In the past, Turkish politics called for ‘structuralist’ analysis: classes were not developed or demarcated enough to allow for anything else.⁵ As bourgeois politics have taken hold, however, a more ‘instrumentalist’ perspective has become possible. This has made the study of relationships between the bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy, among others, all the more important. Dodd maintains that while increased contacts with each other may have helped political stability, ‘it seems unwarranted to assume that these prime products of the Atatürkist system are going to become lackeys of the bourgeoisie without a struggle’. Perhaps. But take the case of (former) economic czar Turgut Özal: as head of the State Planning Organisation and close aide to Prime Minister Demirel, he was one of the architects of the IMF-imposed ‘stabilisation programme’ of 1970. He then joined Sabancı Holding, Turkey’s largest privately-owned corporation. Then he became Deputy Prime Minister in a new Demirel government and engineered the 1980 IMF programme. While the public sector has long been a source of talent for the private sector, such high-level interchange is bound to consolidate the bourgeoisie’s grip over Turkish politics.

When the government is staffed with individuals whose only qualifications are their party memberships, whose only loyalties therefore lie with the party, and who get shifted in and out of office at the drop of a hat, it becomes doubtful that the bureaucracy can be regarded as an autonomous object of study. Rather, it appears that it must be considered to be an extension of multiparty politics, and can be analysed as such.

The neo-fascist right

Mainstream commentaries on Turkey are remarkable in their lack of understanding of those political movements to which Weiker curiously refers as 'ideological', particularly the extreme right. Putting aside the fact that the centre is every bit as ideological as the right or left, there are two basic possibilities: either many students of Turkey have been unduly alarmist in stressing the importance and dangers of the neo-fascist movement, or else others have failed to appreciate its potential, as well as more fundamentally the basic nature of Turkish politics.

The second proposition is supported by the events that preceded the latest military take-over, and there is now profuse evidence pointing to the activities and strategies of Colonal Alparslan Türkeş's Nationalist Action Party (NAP).⁶ A bit of history may be in order. First and foremost, it is not the case that 'the Turkish Workers' Party [WPT]... broke up into rival factions, from which an extremist urban guerilla group emerged to begin a campaign of murders, bombings and kidnappings. *In return*, the NAP and other ultra-rightist groups organised their own squads of gun-slinging "commandos".' (Hale, emphasis added)⁷ The commando forces were organised during 1967-8, *before* the Turkish People's Liberation Army or any other leftist guerilla group ever struck. The first acts of political violence took place even earlier, when right-wingers attacked WPT headquarters in July 1965, and again in 1967 and 1968.⁸ During 1968-9 right-wing commandos attacked student strikers and demonstrators, and the first political assassinations took place: leftist student Vedat Demircioglu was killed by police in July 1968, and two WPT members were murdered by right-wingers on the notorious 'Bloody Sunday' (16 February 1969). In fact, of the nine political deaths during 1969, only one was suffered by the right: Mustafa Bilgin was killed when the explosives he was manufacturing in the Istanbul headquarters of the National Turkish Student Union blew up.⁹

If anything, it was the violence directed against students, workers (three had been killed by the end of 1968) and the WPT, among other factors, that persuaded leftist radicals to seek violent ways to power. More important still, the assaults on the left did not emanate solely from the 'extreme' right; it was none other than Süleyman Demirel's 'moderate' Justice Party that set up the nationwide anti-communist organisations that periodically attacked WPT members and regional offices.¹⁰

No doubt the NAP served the interests of the 'powers that be', which is why the JP and other conservative elements gave it support. They must have thought it could be 'used' as a weapon to crush the left – and, incidentally, neutralise the RPP, against which much of the violence was directed. Yet, as a neo-fascist, radical party, it had its own interests to serve. Türkeş's attempts to steer the course of the 1980 regime further to the right had resulted in his purge and exile, and Talât

Aydemir's two foiled attempts at military take-over ended in his execution. The party would be a vehicle for the development of a mass-based movement, to succeed where actions from above had failed, and its paramilitary forces were a convenient instrument for the intimidation or elimination of political competitors. Ethnic (Turk versus Kurd) and religious (Alawite versus Sunni) divisions were exploited for popular mobilisation. Even putsches and 'Great Marches' were tried. In short, the NAP had very much its own dynamics, and a fairly well-defined programme. This, it seems, makes the collaboration of 'moderates' on the right with it all the more serious, and their political wisdom all the more questionable.

Dodd feels that the NAP philosophy, 'even if not developed to any intellectual depth, does not show some typically fascist or national socialist attitudes', on several accounts: that the party doctrine was not presented as a substitute for religion, that it was not anti-intellectual, anti-individual, anti-democratic, racist, totalitarian, or excessively statist. Each of these points is debatable. Yet, whether or not political science purists agree that 'fascist' is the right term for the NAP, it is nevertheless clear that the party was not in any sense 'conservative', as Weiker calls it. In fact, by using this term for the NAP and its front, the Confederation of Nationalist Trade Unions (known as MİSK), he compounds the mistake made by Demirel and other conservatives when they opted to 'use' the radical right and were, in turn, used by it. The left's enemy is not necessarily the centre's friend, as the experience of Turkey amply demonstrates.

The religious right

If the neo-fascist right is misunderstood, the religious right (represented by the National Salvation Party) does not score significantly better. Hale, for instance, lumps the NSP together with the JP in discussing 'The Right', even though the differences separating the two are by far more substantial than their common attributes. Indeed, these differences give a clue as to why the Nationalist Front governments were as plagued with internal discord as they were.

The NSP aimed at reviving precisely the mythical Ottoman tradition which Dodd correctly asserts could not 'easily be resurrected by modern Turks to provide identity and protection against the influence of the West', and, one might add, of the advanced capitalism that developed concurrently. The roots of this retrospection lie in the significance of 'westernisation' for Turkish society. To give one example, the number of cloth-producing looms in Istanbul and Üsküdar dropped from 2,750 to twenty-five in the few decades following the 1838 Commercial Convention with Britain.¹¹ Along with the capitulations granted to the western powers came the dissolution of the local industries, a process that continued under different guise during the Republic. After Turkey was

'reopened' to the world in 1946, the traditional sphere started to fall victim not only directly to cheaper imports, but also to the larger Turkish entrepreneurs who launched a drive for industrialisation in collusion with the West.¹² Thus, Europe was more than 'either Christian or Godless' (Dodd) for the traditionalist supporters of the NSP. It was also the harbinger of their destruction.

Hale appears to see a contradiction when he writes '*though* it sought to protect the interests of small entrepreneurs, the NSP seemed more interventionist in its economic approach than the JP' (emphasis added). But it was interventionist precisely *because* it sought to protect the interests of unorganised capital. Turkey in the 1970s was far from an Adam Smithian ideal where the hard-worker triumphs. The development of big capital through a centralisation and concentration process was such that, without protection, the 'small entrepreneur' had no chance before the formidable competition of industrial giants and the international financial support they enjoyed.

Certainly, part of the NSP vote was also due to its appeal to traditional religious sentiments. This may be assumed to account for the party's relative success in the less developed areas. (see Weiker) What will happen to this electoral base with the penetration of industrialisation may only be conjectured. However, an important source of NSP votes, which Weiker appears to neglect, has been the most rapidly developing areas of the country.¹³ Here, religion has been primarily a medium of articulation for members of a traditional sphere faced with the merciless onslaught of the times. As such, it has not been successful in bringing about any change for the better or reversing the trends.

The economy

The problematic of modernisation theory aims in general at perpetuating the westernist status quo (or alternately, capitalist hegemony) rather than analysing the social and economic reality with an eye towards betterment. Together with Weiker's subjective opinions, this gives rather interesting results, as for example in the contrast between his references to the Kemalist reforms as 'the amazing Atatürk ... set out to turn his entire country around with one *dramatic revolution* after another', and to 'the Iranian *collapse* of 1979' (emphasis added). Such neo-orientalist modernisation terminology occurs throughout the book.

General perspective is one area at least where Hale's text is relatively clear. Despite Turkey's geographical location in the Middle East, he writes in the Preface, its proximity to Europe 'adds to [its] importance, since existing agreements envisage [its] entry into the EEC [European Economic Community] by the end of this century'. This is the dominant approach: Turkey is perceived as a potential member of the EEC, and ways and means are investigated to optimise its contribution. In-

evitably, the prescription thus formulated also stresses the preservation of the status quo, indeed its reinforcement. For example, Hale writes, 'if, as planned, [Turkey] becomes a full member of the EEC by the late 1990s, [it] could well account for an important proportion of the Community's agricultural output.' Thus, since other EEC members are advanced industrialised countries, it is implicitly proposed that Turkey realise *its* 'development' through agriculture. But is this what is best for the Turks?

Some other comments made by Hale in connection with Turkish agriculture are also noteworthy for their political implications. After stating that capitalist relations of production dominate western Anatolian agriculture, he goes on to propose that attempts at land reform would reduce output since 'efficient, modern farming depends on the existence of large farm units and substantial inputs of capital'. Alternatives to capitalist development are thus not deemed worthy of consideration, and Turkey is advised not to hinder output maximisation by engaging in land reform, leading the reader to conclude that the people of Turkey had better not waste their time with political alternatives outside capitalism.

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References

- 1 Among other works, William Hale has edited *Aspects of Modern Turkey* (London, 1976); Walter Weiker has written *The Turkish Revolution 1960-61* (Washington, 1963) and *Political Tutelage and Democracy in Turkey: the free party and its aftermath* (Leiden, 1973); and C.H. Dodd has written *Politics and Government in Turkey* (Berkeley, 1969).
- 2 Çağlar Keyder, 'The political economy of Turkish democracy', *New Left Review* (No. 115, May-June 1979), p. 18.
- 3 For a summary, see I.C. Schick and E.A. Tonak, 'The political economy of quicksand: international finance and the foreign debt dimension of Turkey's economic crisis', *The Insurgent Sociologist* (Vol. X, no. 3, Winter 1981), pp. 71-2.
- 4 TIP Merkez Bilim, Eğitim ve Araştırma Bürosu, '1978 Türkiye Raporu', *Yurt ve Dünya* (No. 14, March 1979), p. 155. This figure should be compared to the total export revenues, amounting in 1978 to \$2.288 billion, and the remittances from workers abroad, totalling \$983 million, OECD, *Turkey* (Paris, 1980), p. 51.
- 5 In this respect, it is not altogether surprising that Frederick Frey failed to find a strong correlation between the elites of different parties and their socio-economic backgrounds (as reported by Dodd). The concept of politics 'by proxy' appears to be a useful tool in understanding this phenomenon, as much in the context of the Kemalist elite as in that of the bureaucracy and especially the military later on. Feroz Ahmad, 'Political Economy of Kemalism', in Ali Kazancigil and Ergun Özbudun (eds), *Atatürk: founder of a modern state* (London, 1981).
- 6 For some reason, both Weiker and Dodd persistently mistranslate *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* as National (rather than Nationalist) Action Party. They similarly refer to *Milliyetçi Cephe* as National (rather than Nationalist) Front. This should not allow

the foreign reader to miss the murky connotations of both names.

Some other translations also leave much to be desired. Weiker and Hale translate *Türkiye İsci Partisi* as 'Turkish Labour Party' and 'Turkish Workers' Party', respectively, rather than 'Workers' Party of Turkey'. The nuance is very important indeed, in view of the party position on the 'peoples' of Turkey, the Turks and the Kurds. Finally, *Devrimci İsci Sendikaları Konfederasyonu* (DISK) is rendered by Hale and Dodd as 'Reformist Labour Unions Confederation' and 'Federation of Reformist (or Revolutionary) Workers' Trade Unions', respectively. It is obvious, however, that the well-known ambiguity inherent in the use of the words *inkılâp* and *devrim* by the Kemalists to mean 'reform' rather than 'revolution' does not apply here. While DISK publications in English translate the name as 'progressive', a responsible translation has to be 'Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Trade Unions'.

- 7 Weiker also writes 'extremist violence, often centered among left-wing students but regularly answered by right-wing extremists', and 'the activity of [WPT] supporters was also one factor in arousing right-wing extremism and terrorism' (emphasis added); and even Dodd, who has the best understanding of the situation among the three, states that left-wing violence 'met with extreme counter violence from the Grey Wolf commando groups' (emphasis added).
- 8 Feroz Ahmad and Bedia Turgay Ahmad, *Türkiye'de Çok Partili Politikanın Açıklamalı Kronolojisi 1945-1971* (Ankara, 1976). Of course, there were earlier acts of political violence, such as the attack by right-wingers on the newspaper *Tan* in 1945, and the assassination of leftist author Sabahattin Ali in 1949. 'First' refers here to the beginning of another phase in the anti-left violence endemic to Turkey.
- 9 Orhan Apaydin, *Kim Öldürüyor, Nicin Öldürüyor* (İstanbul, 1978), pp. 136-7. This book contains a useful chronology of political violence in Turkey, including a record of all political assassinations until December 1978.
- 10 See Metin Toket, *Solda ve Sağda Verusanlar* (Ankara, 1971), pp. 47-8.
- 11 Ömer Celâl Sarc, 'Ottoman Industrial Policy 1840-1914' in Charles Issawi (ed.), *The Economic History of the Middle East 1800-1914* (Chicago and London, 1966), p. 51.
- 12 The collapse of the traditional local soda (*gazoz*) industry before the powerful competition of Coca Cola is but one example of this process. Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy 1950-1975* (Boulder, Colo., 1977), p. 243.
- 13 Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey* (Leiden, 1981), pp. 97, 108-10.

Bitter Sugar: slaves today in the Caribbean

By MAURICE LEMOINE (Chicago, Banner Press, and London, Zed Press, 1985). 308pp. £7.95

Every year, some thousands of Haitian men, driven by an unendurable poverty, their wives and children desperately undernourished, are compelled into slavery. Not, it must be clear, simply into harsh, poorly paid labour, with scant welfare or medical facilities – that would be bad enough – but into actual servitude. Philanthropists with no shirts to their backs nor sandals to their feet, they fill up the bank vaults of the Duvaliers, prop up the Dominican economy, and sweeten with their labour the coffee of their North American neighbours. They are the Kongos – so named after the last people to be torn as slaves from Africa and hurled into the plantations of the Caribbean. Their job is to

cut cane – work which no Dominican, not even the poorest, will do. The Dominican government pays a fat sum to the Haitian government, the deal is sanctified by a fine sounding and comprehensive contract, every term of which is a lie, the US gets it sugar cheap, and Gulf and Western shareholders get, no doubt, that extra bit of dividend on the company's extensive operations (including sugar) in Dominica.

Lemoine's book is based on what must have been a highly secret, often dangerous investigation of the actual conditions on the huge, virtually impenetrable, under-capitalised and under-mechanised sugar estates. Cast partly in the form of a novel, partly in the form of a straightforward account of the relevant historical, political and economic context to this twentieth-century slavery, the book's prevailing tone is that of intense, sustained anger. We are taken through every aspect of the process, from the initial hiring, the transportation to Dominica, the dumping of the cane-cutters in stockades (the barracons of an earlier period), their discharging on to the 'bateys' or plantations, their dangerous, filthy, backbreaking labour, their ignominious rounding up and dumping back in Haiti when the season is over. And, at every turn, bribery, violence and hunger.

Those to be hired, out of the thousands queueing and jostling day and night – for did not the radio announce that a cane-cutter could earn \$15.00 a day – have to bribe the TonTon Macoutes who regularly beat up and disperse the crowds. One of them is Estimé Mondestin, a trained driver for whom there is no work in Haiti, whose fortunes the book at first follows. Mondestin gets through the 'hiring' and the cursory medical examination; others, physically unfit but desperate to earn, have to bribe the doctor who examines them. Once in the intolerable conditions of the bateys (no sanitation, no running water, nothing to cook on or with, not even a bed to sleep on), Mondestin and his fellow workers have to bribe the carter to take away the cane they have cut for weighing – otherwise they don't get paid. And the scales, of course, are fixed. But for maybe a week or two before the work begins, they get, despite the contract, nothing. And so, after selling perhaps the shirt on their backs, or their shoes, they have to get credit (with interest) at the company store. But even to get credit is a service for which they have to pay. Those who try to run away are caught, who try like Brutus in this book to walk the hundreds of miles back to the Haitian border, are thrown into jail, perhaps to be sold to another estate. Kidnapping is frequent:

In the Dominican Republic, due to the appalling working conditions, numerous coffee plantations, *fincas*, vast agricultural concerns, permanently lack manpower. They are ready to pay to obtain it, whether it be provided by force or by free will. And they pay.

Eleven pesos a head for Haitians.

As the Kongos are told at every turn, at every humiliation, 'you have been sold, Duvalier sold you to the sugar estates'. For Brutus, it is this which forces the recognition that he is nothing other than slave labour. Mondestin comes to learn too – convinced at the start that if only Jean Claude Duvalier knew of the abuses perpetrated, he would do something about them, he is forced by bitter experience to recognise that the corrupt bureaucracies of Haiti and Dominica are hand in glove, and Jean Claude is at the apex of the corruption and exploitation.

What Lemoine's graphic, intense reconstruction of life on the bateys conjures up most vividly, is the strength of the will to survive, to struggle for some kind of life, even, where possible, to resist, despite all the brutalisation inflicted. In one moving passage, where some of the workers go to the shack of an old Haitian, a *viejo* who has cut cane in Dominica for many years, they remember something of what it is to be human again:

The young woman offered them coffee, and the Kongos felt a strange sensation sweep over them: painful, and at the same time marvellously reminiscent of times past. They almost felt like crying; thus, they were still men, a young woman was offering them coffee. . .

Many writers are adept at describing the subtleties, depths and anguishes of emotional states; few either attempt or have the power to convey the agony of hunger or the numbing pain of monotonous intense physical labour. Lemoine does this simply by the passion with which he repeatedly flings the truth in our faces. The characters themselves have little individuality, but then individuality is not a quality allowed them:

All the viejos' kids were wasting away, gnawed by undernourishment . . . The kids' bones decalcified a little more each hour, each day more of their brain cells were dying off, never to regenerate. Situation defined by the ruling classes in a stock lapidary judgment: these people get uglier and stupider every day.

At times, however, particularly towards the end of the book when Lemoine is concerned to intimate the growing signs of organised resistance in the cane-fields, his characters speak too readily in the author's tone, the 'message' comes across too obviously. Nor does the juxtaposition of the workers' story with the political and historical analysis always work. The tension is broken. Sometimes, in the urgency to convey what US imperialism, aided and abetted by a series of dictators, corrupt politicians, military and bureaucrats, has inflicted on Haiti and Dominica, the subject matter remains undigested, unmemorable. What does remain is the knowledge of a savage injustice and monstrous corruption – of which one of the major beneficiaries is one of the largest US multinationals. It is not until one has read through

to the book's end that the full force of Lemoine's simple opening statement can be appreciated:

'There is, in this account, alas, no fiction.'

Institute of Race Relations

HAZEL WATERS

I... Rigoberta Menchú: an Indian woman in Guatemala

Edited and introduced by ELISABETH BURGOS-DEBRAY
(London, Verso Books, 1984). 252pp. £4.95 paper

To European eyes, Guatemala must frequently appear only as a distant and wretchedly poor country, which has not yet tipped over into the maelstrom of civic and military strife that has characterised the recent histories of its neighbours, El Salvador and Nicaragua. Denied the mixed blessings of a permanent international press corps, knowledge in Britain about Guatemala remains thin. Yet Guatemala holds a strategic position in the disposition of power in the Central American isthmus. This strategic centrality derives from the prolonged counter-revolution which has been conducted by an increasingly sophisticated military regime since the overthrow of Arbenz in 1954.

A counter-revolutionary state based on terror is not a unique feature of the political landscape of Central and South America – although its longevity is unusual. But in Guatemala, the particularity of the terror is characterised most of all by a calculated genocide in which the majority Indian population has been systematically brutalised and murdered.

Out of this appalling nightmare, ethnographer Elisabeth Burgos-Debray has chronicled the testimony of a young Quiché Indian, Rigoberta Menchú, who has determined to transform her own story into 'the testimony of my people'. It is a story told with simplicity, great dignity and a sharp intelligence; it must be one of the most eloquent and moving books to have come out of any press in the past year.

Much of the book concerns the fascinating reconstruction of the rich and expressive culture of the Quiché Indians – the rituals and rites of passage, the material cultures on which their livelihoods depend and extraordinary glimpses into the interior symbolic world of the people. But this is not an account of a culture presented as a quaint anthropological monograph, for it is a culture that has increasingly been drawn into the vortex of Guatemala's murderous war of attrition. The compulsion of external economic forces induces the cruel seasonal migration of Indian workers from the altiplano to the *fincas* – the great lowland plantations which perpetuate a system of exploitation structured by a modern hybrid combining the traditions of indentured labour with the mobility of labour demanded by the 'free market'. From the 1970s, however, the altiplano itself has become the focus of concerted state action, the

government attempting to parcellise the collective lands and implant the ethos of the individualised small holder. It was this intervention most of all, threatening their very existence, which provoked such determined resistance.

What clearly emerges from Rigoberta Menchú's account is the means by which the raw materials of a pacific and oppressed culture become transmuted into the elements of an advanced political philosophy. In the process, 'borrowings' are made from the culture of the oppressors – the Spanish language and the Catholic religion most of all. But the result is, quite simply, a revolutionary native ideology. She declares that she now participates 'as an Indian first, and then as a woman, a peasant, a Christian, in the struggle of all my people'. From this perspective, the enemy appears not only as the army, but the very social structure of the *ladinos* – the non-Indian population of Guatemala – who 'behave like a superior race'.

Menchú has endured hideous sufferings: the unspeakable tortures committed on her mother and baby brother; the death of her father, the great peasant leader Vicente Menchú, at the hands of the troops in Guatemala City during the occupation of the embassies in 1980; and a life of fear and clandestine activity, culminating in her decision to renounce her lover and so too the prospects of having her own family. She draws her strength from the struggle of her people – and from Christianity.

This Christianity is a peculiar bricolage. 'The Bible', she claims, 'says that there is one God and we too have one God: the sun, the heart of the sky.' As a young catechist, she was puzzled by the reluctance of the nuns to answer her question: 'What would happen if we rose up against the rich?' She talks of her people having to use the weapons of their ancestors in their fight against the army – machetes, stones, hot water, chile, salt. But again it is to the Bible that they turn for instruction: 'We took the example of Moses for the men, and we have the example of Judith, who was a very famous woman in her time and appears in the Bible. She fought very hard for her people and made many attacks against the king they had then, until she finally had his head. She held her victory in her hand, the head of the king. This gave us the vision, a stronger idea of how we must defend ourselves.' And her stories of their defence, their first victories against the military, are told with euphoria and humour. She has, too, an inimitable courage.

But it would be wrong to think that she reveals all to the *ladino* intellectuals who read this book. As she says in her closing words: 'I'm still keeping secret what I think no one should know. Not even anthropologists or intellectuals, no matter how many books they have, can find out all our secrets.'

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Caribbean and African Languages: social history, language, literature and education

By MORGAN DALPHINIS (London, Karia Press, 1985). 304pp. £6.95

This book, by a black linguist/educationalist who is also a natural speaker of Caribbean Creole and scholar of Hausa, brings together a series of papers on Caribbean language issues. The book, which the author tells us is based on fourteen years of thinking and studying, commences with an excellent study of the social history of Creoles. We are told about the Francophone, the Anglophone as well as the Portuguese based, creoles. The author places great emphasis on St Lucia Patois, which is a Francophone, and shows the African influence on it: 'Caribbean languages, perhaps more than any other types, are closely tied to the society in which they were created and are at present used.' With these words, Dalphinis begins what is an in depth study of the birth and the development of Caribbean Creoles. One effect of the circumstances under which these Creoles developed is the frequently negative attitude towards them. Dalphinis looks at the high/low linguistic prestige ladder, showing that in some countries Creoles enjoy high status while in others they are of low status. 'In the case of both Casamance in Senegal and Banjul in Gambia, to speak Creole is to be a member of the ruling social group. In St Lucia, on the other hand, to speak Patwa (French Creole) was to identify oneself with the "lower" element of the society despite the fact that 99 per cent of that society speaks Patwa.' Dalphinis goes on to illustrate the link between the status of the speaker and the status of the language. He also links ideology and response to language. For instance, the rebellion of the Maroons in St Lucia has meant that the link has been kept with Africa, its culture and language to a very high degree, despite social pressure from a white society. Within a comparative framework, Dalphinis devotes a chapter to French and African languages in competition in Southern Senegal in which Casamance (Kriul) is fighting against European French, while in St Lucia today the struggle is against English. In the case of Casamance Kriul, the two languages in conflict are of the same lexical base, while in the case of St Lucia Patwa, the two languages are of a different lexical base. In both cases, Kriul and Patwa (St Lucia), there is evidence of African language structures and lexical items from African languages.

Dalphinis' chapters on Creole in relation to education should be read by every teacher in schools, tutor in adult education, and lecturer in further and in higher education. At the school and FE College level, Dalphinis gives both the argument for and against the ESL (English Second Language) approach to teaching Standard British English to pupils of Caribbean origin. The argument *for* this is that these pupils use a linguistic form which is completely different to Standard British

English – a difference due to the African structures and vocabulary which were combined with those of Europe to form what is now a ‘different’ linguistic system. The argument *against* is based on the assumption and the view held by educators and some teachers that Caribbean people speak a dialect of English, hence they are in the same linguistic category as the speakers of Cockney, Yorkshire dialect or any other social class or regional variant of English. Other views are that the Caribbean person speaks a variant of the same order as, say, the Australian or American variant of British English; hence the ESL approach is not the answer.

In general, *Caribbean and African languages* is a book which should be on the reading list given to all students of education, social history, linguistics and sociology. It should be brought to the attention of all those who are involved in the education, not only of children of Caribbean origin, but of all children. Above all, it should be placed in the hands of the natural speakers of Caribbean Creoles, especially those who still hold a negative perception of them.

Sheffield

PETRONELLA BREINBURG

Propaganda and Empire: the manipulation of British public opinion 1880-1960

By JOHN M. MacKENZIE (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1984). 274 pp. £25

Were the British people indifferent to imperialism? John MacKenzie says they were not, and sets out to demonstrate how fully their lives were littered with the ideological byproducts of Empire. In the pages of *Propaganda and Empire*, he sweeps together ornaments and frills, slight curiosities and substantial artefacts into a vast cultural cavalcade which, he maintains, lumbered on well into the heart of the twentieth century. Postcards, cigarette cards, other new advertising techniques, sheet music, brass bands, music hall entertainment, the theatre and cinema, imperial exhibitions and festivals with their populated ‘native villages’ (‘visual living taxonomy’), the more sophisticated output of the Imperial Institute and other propaganda societies, school textbooks, adventure stories, Sunday school and missionary tracts, assorted journals and newspapers – all had their place in the enormous propaganda package designed to rally national support for Empire, and to interpret the world as ‘a vast adventure playground in which Anglo-Saxon superiority could be repeatedly demonstrated vis-à-vis all other races, most of whom were depicted as treacherous and evil’. In which, in short, every Englishman was potentially a forerunner of Indiana Jones.

The book is impressive as a compendium of the bric-à-brac of

popular imperialism, though an expensive one at nearly 10p a page. But MacKenzie presumably had a more analytic purpose as well – the examination of the ‘manipulation of British public opinion’, beginning in the late nineteenth century, when governments found it increasingly important to win the acquiescence and cooperation (Gramsci’s ‘consent’) of the largely literate working class, newly armed with the vote and organised into trade unions. But dissemination of imperialist propaganda does not, by itself, equal ‘manipulation’ – there has as well to be evidence of something being acted upon, of an acceptance by those at whom the propaganda is aimed. MacKenzie sidesteps the question of how effective was the prodigious propaganda output, tending to assume that its sheer volume did the trick of turning workers into passive consumers of an imperialist ideology which was all around them.

But were matters really so straightforward? Was the entire social formation in Britain ever so completely suffused with the world view of the dominant economic class? Engels certainly thought so, writing to Kautsky in 1882: ‘You ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well exactly the same as they think about politics in general: the same as the bourgeois think ... the workers gaily share the feast of England’s monopoly of the world market and the colonies.’ MacKenzie accepts such an assessment as his starting-point without digging deeper, and addresses himself neither to the reason for this unity of outlook, nor to what it tells us about the way ideologies function.

The book thus lacks an adequate analytical framework, and statements which point the way to a fuller analysis are rarely followed up. For instance, in the opening pages, MacKenzie says that ‘patriotism ... became a vital counterweight to class consciousness’, but never pursues the subject beyond describing the way working men’s clubs became de-politicised by the turn of the century. Later, he comments that the ‘social climbing’ promoted by emigration to the colonies was not entirely to the liking of sections of the ruling class, and that colonial upstarts got their come-down in various plays and music hall songs. But, more importantly, ‘the working-class had ceased to be an object of abuse (such attitudes by then had shifted to other races)’. However, he does not go further to discuss the significance of this shift, and assess the extent to which the working class had internalised Social Darwinian ideas and assumptions of white superiority. He does make it clear that those who claimed to speak for the working class – the socialists and social democrats – shouldered the ‘White Man’s Burden’ or moral trusteeship over the ‘lower races’ well into the era of de-colonisation: one reason why it is so hard to unearth a discernible white anti-racist tradition in Britain.

The book ends as Britain was divesting itself of empire, but then flashes briefly forward to the Falklands War to show that popular

imperialism is hardly a spent force. We are left with a sense of the suffocating resilience of 'national complacency and conceit', and of the racist ideas which remain fundamental to white culture.

London

NANCY MURRAY

Ill Fares the Land: essays on food, hunger and power

By SUSAN GEORGE (Washington, DC, Institute for Policy Studies, 1984). 102pp. \$5.95 paper

Why do people starve? Why are half a billion to a billion people malnourished and why are their numbers likely to grow? Our instincts tell us to deny reality, or to shy away from understanding it, because of its supposed complexity. Susan George, the author of *How the Other Half Dies* and *Feeding the Few*, asserts, in elegant prose and with powerful argument, that the root of the problem is really quite simple. People starve because they lack power. George argues that in order to understand and demystify the fact of hunger, crucial questions of power must be posed. 'Who controls food and food producing resources, especially land? Who decides what constitutes the agricultural surplus and how it is distributed? Who has the power to determine that some will eat while others will not?'

With her focus on power, Susan George's theoretical approach combines both dependency theory, revolving around historical analyses of the inequality of power between centre and periphery, and class conflict theory. The presumption of conflict within as well as between nations allows her to face the odds against development strategies actually benefiting the poor. Her three propositions are:

1. Development strategies benefiting the least favoured classes (or nations) will not be acceptable to the dominant classes or nations unless their interests are also substantially served.
2. Development strategies which benefit only poor classes or nations will be ignored, sabotaged or otherwise suppressed by the powerful in so far as possible.
3. Development strategies serving the interests of the elites while doing positive harm to the poor will be put into practice and, if necessary, maintained by violence, so long as no basic change in the balance of political and social forces takes place.

Not surprisingly, Susan George's focus on power and conflict stands at odds with the apolitical modernisation theory which opens the door to a US-based model of agricultural development with its inappropriate technology, and ideology, as well as a 'modernising elite'. She refuses to bank on the presumed positive effects of long-term capitalist transition, whether advocated by the usual sources or by some marxists currently

imbued with a born-again enthusiasm for the transforming effect of 'real' capitalism in the face of sluggish performances by both state capitalism and socialism. George doubts the ability of the Green Revolution technological package and systems based upon profit to meet the needs of the poor. Instead, she advocates land reform, the need to listen to peasants and use their agricultural knowledge, and the necessity of preserving peasant technological choices, trusting the rural poor to know the local causes of their own poverty and hunger and, with relevant help, discover the long-term solutions to their problems.

Susan George also writes about the need for reform beyond the farm level both as necessary short-term relief and as a political tactic. She sees value in the New International Economic Order (NIEO), in the concept of basic needs, in the recent awareness of women in agriculture, and in the notion of participation. However, these essays were written between 1979 and 1982, and since then the international climate for even minimal reform has sharply deteriorated. NIEO is dead, because amidst world economic crisis the powerful states are even more resistant to it. Basic needs are under fire because the key words in official development circles are productivity and austerity; meanwhile, agribusiness and the technical fix have returned to the scene stronger than ever. The needs of women and the notion of local participation still receive ritual bows, but they are no longer given serious attention because women do not control major productive resources, and participation is seen as irrelevant or a threat to strategies based upon private enterprise. In short, core concepts that were on the international reform agenda only five years ago are now in eclipse.

At the international level, George argues for an end to aid to regimes that have not demonstrated a concern for the poor. Lacking this commitment, aid only reinforces trends towards rural social polarisation and landlessness. She recommends wiping out Third World debt, because debt puts a premium upon producing crops for export despite escalating food imports. At the local level, she advocates NGO-sponsored small projects that foster local self-reliance and greater popular control over resources. She implicitly connects the economic task of nurturing viable local mass-based institutions with political opportunity: 'we must find available political spaces and work in them, and we must create new ones. Hunger will never be vanquished unless we can strengthen the weak, and weaken the strong.' This is, she says, a process of building countervailing power and working for the slow revolution.

University of Massachusetts, Amherst
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SANDRA BLANCHARD
FRANK HOLMQUIST

Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis

Edited by JAMES MANOR (London, Croom Helm, 1984). 229 pp.
£16.95

Sri Lanka Island of Terror: an indictment

By E.M. THORNTON and R. NITHTHYANANTHAN (London,
Eelam Research Organisation, 1984). 123pp. £2.95

Two books on the same subject could hardly be more dissimilar. *Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis* attempts to be the voice of academic reason, sympathetic perhaps, but detached. While *Sri Lanka Island of Terror* makes no bones about being the voice of the passionate protagonist, involved and engaged. Both books look at the racist pogroms of July 1983 in Sri Lanka, in which thousands of Tamils lost their lives, homes and livelihoods, and try to trace the background to that event.

One cannot avoid the conclusion that James Manor's book is a hastily cobbled together affair. It reads as though the author had been working on one collection of papers dealing with 'change' on the political scene of 1982 (which included the scrapping of a general election and the premature holding of a presidential one) when he was suddenly overtaken by the 'crisis' of 1983 – and changed tack accordingly. Hence, the book is in two sections which sit uneasily together. Secondly, though he states his aim is to approach the subject 'from a diversity of viewpoints', it is significant that there is not one Tamil contribution. The viewpoints are those of visiting western academics and the Sinhala middle class. Thirdly, it is deplorable that in a collection where almost every contributor is forced to criticise or condemn the government and the ruling class for their part in repression and racism, one of the main architects of that repression (and now its supremo), Defence Minister Athulathmudali, is allowed space to justify the wholly corrupt elections of 1982. So much for academic detachment, but then Athulathmudali himself is a celebrated Oxford academic – all of which makes mock of other contributors. 'Priya Samarakone', writing a comprehensive piece on civil rights violations, has insisted on a pseudonym to protect his (or her) identity in Sri Lanka. How much more telling his/her argument would have been if he/she had refused to be published alongside one of those most responsible for such violations and had found an alternative outlet instead.

Without a Tamil perspective in this collection, many of the observations inevitably appear half-baked and partial. Manor himself implies that only the Sinhalese make history (the Tamils are not allowed a hand in their own destiny) and that the future will 'hinge on the power which the 77-year-old President possesses' – no word of the Tamil liberation movement, let alone super-power involvement. M.P. Moore balances out militant Sinhala Buddhism with Tamil nationalism, equating cause

and consequence: both want '(provocative) changes in the form and symbols of the polity – a "Buddhist state" and a separate Tamil State'. Eric Meyer, 'seeking the roots of the tragedy', discovers again the shallow argument that the Sinhalese majority '*sees itself as a minority whose identity is threatened*' (his italics) and hints that it was the Tamil call for separatism that was responsible for the 1983 pogrom – excelling Moore thereby in substituting cause for consequence. R.L. Stirrat, examining the Catholic church and the riots, concludes that 'today religion counts for much less and ethnicity for much more', thereby avoiding the central fact of the ethnicising of the Buddhist religion. Sri Lanka must be the only country where an ethnic category (Sinhala) is attached to a religion (Buddhism) to signify a polity (Sinhala-Buddhist).

If the Tamil voice has been muted by Manor and Co., it comes out loud and shrill in Thornton and Niththyananthan's 'indictment'. Here is the voice of Tamil nationalism telling it like it was – and is. Like other nationalisms that lack a socialist or revolutionary dimension, it tends to oversimplify: the policy of the Sinhalese elite who were handed power by the British was 'the systematic annihilation of the ancient Tamil nation and destruction of the Tamil national identity'. It tends to make overblown its cause: forgetting Chile, Lebanon, South Africa, it describes the pogrom as 'a reign of terror unparalleled in the history of any civilised country in recent time'. It romanticises its people: 'All over the world expatriates have shown what they can do when they are free. Thrifty, hardworking, intelligent and innovative, the full genius of the Tamil people has yet to be exploited ... Tamils, not only in Sri Lanka but all over the world, will strive, will fight and will prevail.' And it finally ends up in limp and futile prescriptions for the future: 'a massive change of heart in the Sinhalese'.

But despite these obvious and glaring failings, the book has value, if only for its eye-witness accounts of the massacre of fifty-three helpless Tamil prisoners in Welikade jail, its first-hand report of a refugee camp and the personal story of a Tamil youth tortured by the Sinhalese army in 1984. Some of these accounts have already appeared – but mostly in bulletins and magazines that circulate solely within the Tamil community. And they convey more vividly than any nationalist rhetoric the stark and brutal experience of Sri Lanka's Tamils.

Perhaps it is because those experiences have not fundamentally changed in two years that Niththyananthan's book has stood the test of time (far better than Manor's which, on reading now, seems an irrelevant academic exercise). Tamils may not today be the targets of Sinhalese mobs on the rampage, but they are now the targets of army attacks, mass arrests, detention and torture. Whole villages have been emptied of Tamils in the North and East of the island, and Sinhalese settlers, now armed by the state, are encouraged to colonise Tamil areas.

A whole generation of Tamil young people has been forced to flee the country in an endless diaspora – and for those who remain, there is no normality of life. Sri (Holy) Lanka is still an ‘island of terror’.

Institute of Race Relations

JENNY BOURNE

Education, Repression and Liberation: Palestinians

By SARAH GRAHAM-BROWN (London, World University Service, 1984). 179pp. £3.50 paper

Today there are some four million Palestinians, the majority living under Israeli rule in the state of Israel or the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza, but large numbers scattered in many countries, particularly in the surrounding Arab states. Education for the Palestinians – a people dispersed through successive exoduses outside their homeland and still coerced and repressed within it, a people without a national homeland – has proved an effective tool for individual survival, a focus for resistance to alien rule and, to some extent, a vehicle for the maintenance and transmission of national identity and culture: it has yet to be transformed into an integral part of a liberation struggle that will free Palestinians from the forms of inequality and oppression prevalent within their own society as well as from the domination of others. Sometimes, the symbolism which education has acquired for Palestinians can obscure the fact that education, for most Palestinians, is still locked in patterns created by, and tending to re-create, the dominant inegalitarian social structures of the Arab world. But education is not simply a tool for liberation; it is, at the same time, part of the terrain on which the struggle for liberation must take place – hence it must be, itself, an object of struggle and liberation. These are the central themes of this excellent investigation by Sarah Graham-Brown, who draws on interviews and first-hand observations, through unpublished materials produced by the United Nations and other institutions, to more conventional published sources to weave a coherent and compelling account of the strengths and weaknesses of Palestinian education.

After a brief chapter on education under the Ottomans and under the British – which underlines the limitations and relative neglect of Arab as compared with Jewish education, and the role of schools as centres of political resistance to colonial rule – the author turns to the education of Palestinians as refugees for whom UNRWA provides the first nine years of schooling and some vocational training. As regards the former, it is obliged to follow (with minor modifications) the national curricula used by government and private schools in the various Arab host countries and does not provide a framework entirely suitable to the needs of Palestinians; and as regards the latter, it adopts a conventional

and essentially conservative attitude, particularly towards technical and vocational training for women. Nevertheless, it does provide an education which some men have used to find jobs in the Gulf and elsewhere – an individual survival kit of some value, albeit limited and problematic.

Within Israel itself, Arab education is both separate from and unequal to that of the Jews. The state education law of 1953 aimed ‘to base education on the values of Jewish culture and the achievements of science, on love of homeland and loyalty to the state and the Jewish people’; there have been modifications and compromises since then, but the assumptions of the ‘majority’ culture are not to be questioned. Government resources devoted to Palestinian Arab education are strictly limited and the continuing importance of private education ensures spatial and social inequality in access to schooling.

As for the West Bank and Gaza Strip – the occupied territories – the school structures (examination systems, curricula) remain basically those of the previous Jordanian (West Bank) and Egyptian (Gaza Strip) administration, but actual control of schools and finance is in the hands of the Israelis. Facilities and standards of education in state schools are poorer than in either UNRWA or private schools, and the drop-out rate is high, particularly among girls. (UNRWA runs schools in the refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; and over 50 per cent of all pupils in Gaza attend UNRWA institutions). For teachers, political restrictions, low pay and difficult conditions of work affect morale and entry into the profession.

As for the five universities (four on the West Bank and one in Gaza), Israeli restrictions and harassment constitute the main threats to their viability, and in the absence of an overall strategy for higher education, each university tends to follow its own goals. Consequently, there is a great deal of duplication and some striking gaps in the range of programmes available. All the universities were established along the lines of their western counterparts and only in the last few years have they begun to develop extension work and community projects, linking the expertise and facilities of the universities to the development of local Palestinian communities. Despite these problems, however, these universities have come to be seen as symbols of resistance and survival as well as learning.

From 1979 onwards, the PLO began to respond to the need for kindergartens, primary and secondary schools for the Palestinian refugees in the Lebanon (principally) and the advent of the PLO brought a growing sense that education was a means of furthering the national cause as well as of personal advancement. Local voluntary organisations also provided support and education, notably for women and pre-school age children. But the Israeli invasion of 1982 had a devastating effect on education and survival came to loom above everything else for those in the camps. Intimidation, eviction and

poverty combined to make the continuation of regular schooling virtually impossible for most Palestinian families.

In her conclusion, Sarah Graham-Brown summarises the tensions and contradictions within Palestinian education as it exists at present, emphasising in particular the way in which unequal access to qualifications has tended all too often to encourage further the Palestinian diaspora and promote social inequality among Palestinians despite the hope that education will help transmit national identity and commitment to the ideal of unified and egalitarian Palestinian state. Her book will help inform those concerned with the Palestinian struggle; it may well also contribute, through its critical yet comradely approach, to that struggle.

University of East Anglia

DAVID SEDDON

Not in Our Genes: biology, ideology and human nature

By STEVEN ROSE, LEON J. KAMIN and R.C. LEWONTIN
(Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1984). 322pp. £3.95.

In August 1984, education secretary Sir Keith Joseph committed £45,000 to a scheme called 'Catch 'Em Young'. The scheme was intended to initiate a programme which would pick out children with a 'deep seated vicious streak' and a 'sly and vindictive nature'. It would be possible to identify some of these children, even as young as nine, who would then be sent three times a year to an outdoor pursuit centre modelled on Gordonstoun. They would spend ten days at a time there and each child would be taught to 'respect his own abilities so that he can respect others'. Not surprisingly, the scheme was to be aimed at kids in deprived inner-city areas.

The underlying premise of schemes such as 'Catch 'Em Young' is that it is the individual or certain groups who are to blame for the complex problems of the inner city. Deviance, poverty and criminality can be explained as a result of innate individual drives or a collective cultural pathology. Either way, once the root cause has been identified, it can be dealt with by introducing programmes and policies designed to isolate, separate and discipline individuals or to modernise communities with spasmodic inner-city renewal projects. Such programmes have a certain popular and political legitimisation which is based on the use of a language of natural and social scientific respectability – dependent variables, independent variables, control groups – which purports to be politically neutral and ideologically value free.

In this excellent book, Rose, Kamin and Lewontin provide a cogent analysis of the historical roots and contemporary manifestations of these positivistic accounts of human behaviour. In the opening

chapters, they provide an important historical overview of the area and, in particular, the links between such accounts and the rise of bourgeois individualism. The concentration on the brain, and latterly the genes, as the main generators of behaviour meant (and still means) that the reality, complexity and variation of the material world were obscured and ignored. In this way, 'the reductionist materialism of the nineteenth century sought to control, regularise and limit this variation'.

The book identifies a number of substantive areas including social class, the IQ debate, racism, the subordination of women and criminality where innate individual biological explanations are utilised to justify the superiority and domination of one class or group over another. It carefully charts how such explanations are based on a partial view of the world rather than on one which situates explanations of social reality in the complex dialectic between the biological and the social. In each of these areas, 'a variant of reductionist biological determinist theory has been constructed to deal in detail with the specific issue. Once the mode of explanation is set – "there's a gene for it" – the program of research and theory follows for the entire range of social phenomena.'

Clearly, this kind of explanation of deviance and criminality can have a major impact on the lives of individuals. Programmes initiated in state institutions have led to policies which have been designed to discipline the mind and body of the deviant and obliterate any tendencies and ideas which do not support the regime of the institution or the philosophy of the wider society. Psychosurgery, electroconvulsive therapy, the use of drugs, genetic experimentation, the introduction of segregation and control units, the manipulation of psychiatric labels, have all in their different ways supported the underlying premise that somewhere within the individual the cause of deviant behaviour can be found, isolated and cured. The book provides a thorough review of the use of such techniques.

Another important strand in the book is concerned with the type of scientific methodology which underpins many of the studies concerning mental illness, IQ tests and hyperactivity. The authors illustrate how such methodology is often flawed and based on spurious conceptions of what constitutes scientific research. However, this has not prevented money being made available, research papers being written, careers being made and media time being given over to those whose theories are supported by such methodologies.

Like social theory, methodologies do not appear in a politically neutral vacuum but are deeply involved in a politics and an ideology in which genetic malformation, brain dysfunction, personality disorders and cultural disorganisation (rather than structural inequality, institutionalised racism and sexism) become the norm for explaining deviant behaviour.

At a time when individualised explanations of human behaviour are

integral to a range of increasingly repressive social policy initiatives, often supported by natural and social science research projects, this book provides a highly readable, stimulating analysis which demolishes many of these popular and scientific biological explanations.

Liverpool Polytechnic

JOE SIM

Sol Plaatje: South African Nationalist 1876-1932

By BRIAN WILLAN (London, Heinemann, 1984). 436pp. £8.95 paper

Sol Plaatje was an outstanding figure of his era – a prolific writer and journalist, a newspaper editor (he ran several leading Sechuana papers) and a fervent and committed founder of what was to become, in 1912, the ANC. ‘One of the greatest of the sons of South Africa’ is how a contemporary described him. His vision of the future was of a South Africa free of race and colour discrimination.

Willan’s book is a well-researched and carefully written biography that does credit to both author and subject. Each section is presented so that there is a flow and a continuity from one to the next. The influences in Plaatje’s early life and the development of his commitment to the struggle for self-determination – each is contextualised in an account of the lifestyles and ideas of the activists of the era, against the backdrop of burgeoning Afrikanerdom, manifested by increasingly oppressive laws and practices. What emerges is a clear picture of Plaatje’s development as a political and social activist. The liberal influence of the British clergy and missionaries, whose tutelage he greatly respected, gave way under his awakening militancy to vehement campaigning, first against legislation like the 1913 Native Land Act, which effectively made Africans landless in the country of their birth, and then, from 1913 to 1922, in an effort to raise awareness in Europe of the consequences of the Land Act. A gifted orator, Plaatje captured the minds of many with his accounts of the injustices being perpetrated on his people. His immense organisational skills and his thorough knowledge of six languages meant he could organise amongst progressives in South Africa as well as drum up support and finance for projects and organisations, when required, in Europe.

The book is revealing of Plaatje’s tenacity and cunning, but his tendency to, above all else, elevate the values of individual service and moral discipline obscured the underlying causes of what he identified as the decline of the standard of life among Africans. His entire political career and ideals had, indeed, been ‘founded on an appreciation of the values of the Cape franchise’: equal rights for all men within a liberal-democratic framework. Hence, he envisaged change as a

gradual reappraisal of certain laws, at most a concerted lobbying of key (white) figures in positions of power, whom he was always careful to cultivate. But they in their turn were not without their own political motives for humouring Plaatje: he was a prominent figure in the community, one who enjoyed influence among and respect from the chiefs.

In his effort to capture the values and stability of the past, Plaatje was not always able to understand and articulate the changing contemporary experience with his characteristic conviction. His later work, with its concentration on literature, did not really speak to the immediate and oppressive reality of the poorly paid workers in the new townships, and those 'forgotten' in the countryside. The biography is the culmination of considerable research, however, and it must be acknowledged as at best an oversight, or at worst, an indictment of his fellow South Africans, that the early history of struggle forged by those like Plaatje and his contemporaries, might have otherwise been lost to posterity.

Institute of Race Relations

BUSI CHAANE

The Politics of the Police

By ROBERT REINER (Brighton, Wheatsheaf Books, 1985). 258pp.
£6.95

Contemporary Policing: an examination of society in the 1980s

Edited by J.R. THACKRAH (London, Sphere Books, 1985). 202pp.

Law and Order and British Politics

Edited by PHILIP NORTON (Aldershot, Gower, 1984). 224pp.

Just as sections of the British left have recently begun to advocate what they see as a 'realist' approach to crime and 'law and order', so others who would also claim to be on the left have begun to develop a similarly 'realist' approach to policing. And just as Lea and Young have become principal exponents of the former, so this book by Robert Reiner (like Lea and Young, an academic sociologist) looks like becoming the flagship of the 'revisionist tendency' on policing.

There is a sense in which Reiner has really written two books. The first, as he says in his preface, is intended as a text for people on academic courses who can use it as an extended bibliographic essay to discover what work has already been done on the police. At first sight, this is an impressive work and the references to books and articles, on America as well as Britain, run to almost twenty-four pages. But – and it is a major qualification – there is a lot that ought to be here that isn't.

Much of the literature on the police and black people, for instance, has been omitted, including Derek Humphry and Gus John's important statement of the early 1970s, *Police Power and Black People*, and the Institute of Race Relations' *Police Against Black People*. Even the more detached Runnymede Trust study of the 'sus' laws finds no place here. Given Reiner's obviously extensive study and accumulation of references, it is difficult to believe that he is not aware of such accounts and one can only surmise that their omission has been deliberate. Yet it is precisely such accounts which have signalled the politics of the police and provided a more 'realistic' perspective. One needs only the briefest acquaintance with such material to see the absurdity of Reiner's (deadly serious) discussion of 'How fair are the police', which is based on no fewer than five types of discrimination – 'categorical', 'statistical', 'transmitted', 'interactional', and 'institutionalised' – and which concludes that 'The pattern of the discrimination and the map of the population found in police culture are isomorphic. They are both interdependent and bound within the wider structure of racial and class disadvantage.' And this, irony of ironies, in a chapter called 'Demystifying the police'.

Not only is Reiner's review of the literature seriously incomplete, but his account of the references to which he refers is often questionable. For instance, citing the work of Lea and Young, Reiner claims that they accept the validity of the analysis made by the Policy Studies Institute. But Lea and Young do not refer to the PSI study. They could not have done, since it was published only after they had completed their own book. So, too, something I wrote on racial violence is cited in support of the statement that 'The "normal" procedures of the police institutions may indirectly disadvantage ethnic minority victims', when the thrust of my account is clearly to accuse the police of wilful neglect in their failure to protect black people.

Reiner's 'second', and politically more important, book is concerned with advancing the thesis that:

The hope for policing that respects the rights of minorities lies not in democratic control through elected authorities but a reassertion of the traditional legal and professional ideals of the police embodying a universalistic and impartial authority, albeit one sensitive to the need for public acceptance.

Through the review of the literature which forms the 'first book', Reiner argues that democratic accountability and external control of the police through legal and other formal rules are out, and that reform from within is in. Indeed, this is 'the only direction which our present state of knowledge suggests as feasible'.

Reiner is undoubtedly correct to challenge the current left assumption that democratic control of the police is, in itself, *the* answer to the

policing problem – as he says, who would seriously claim that education or housing were somehow ‘closer to the people’ simply because they are run by elected councils? But it does not follow that the answer is to abandon the goal of such control. Rather, it ought to lead us to question the mechanism of ‘actually existing democracy’ and the professionalism which concentrates power and decision-making in the hands of those who ought to be serving society.

Reiner is equally correct to stress the importance of the ‘cop culture’, something to which the left has devoted insufficient attention. But again, it does not follow that reform of this culture, however radical, is the answer either. Indeed, it is not a question of either one or the other, but a matter of both – changing ‘cop culture’ within the context of effective democratic external controls. Each without the other would be limited and ineffective.

Despite its title, this is a profoundly apolitical book in the sense that it shows no understanding of political reality in Britain today. To claim, as Reiner does, that the post-1981 rebellion reforms, in particular the approach of Sir Kenneth Newman, are attempts to ‘depoliticise’ policing flies in the face of the obvious, where the police are the active defenders of an increasingly polarised and authoritarian society. This is so whether they appear in their traditional garb or in the new ‘spring collection’ looks designed by Newman and Scarman.

Anyone who finds Reiner’s argument persuasive ought to read *Contemporary Policing*, a collection of articles by some of the civilian staff at Britain’s most important police training establishment, which, in showing the kind of ideas being passed on to senior British police officers, belies Reiner’s hope in the professionalism of the police and his faith in the new breed of police chiefs.

Reading these papers, one is struck by two things. First, there is the overwhelming extent to which the police are seen as victims, responding to developments not of their own making. That the police themselves might make decisions or actively influence developments never seems to be considered. Second, one is struck by the huge gulf which clearly exists between the police – or civilians working closely with the police at the highest levels – and their critics. This is clear, for example, in the chapter on race and the police and in the editor’s conclusion, where he speaks contemptuously of the ‘predominant voice ... of the clamorous minority ... and the politically-motivated men of the twilight zone whose aim is the downfall of law and order and the ultimate disintegration of society as we know it’. The police, it seems, have learned nothing.

Norton’s collection comes from a series of seminars at Hull University and most of the papers (on party policies, policing after Scarman, community policing, etc.) are too superficial and insubstantial to be of much interest to anyone other than undergraduates. Dixon and

Fishwick, however, provide in their paper a useful corrective to the myth of a 'golden age' of law and order, sketching a history of popular disorder and dissent, while Bottomley and Coleman illustrate the British empiricist tradition at its best, with a rigorous attack on the notion of a 'crisis of criminality', based on a study of official statistics and some well-aimed criticisms of the media.

London

PAUL GORDON

Angolan Women: building the future

Translated by MARGA HOLNESS (London, Zed Press, 1984). 160pp.
£5.95

This is the sort of book I pick up in bookshops, skim through and guiltily put back on the shelf: afraid it will be boring, but feeling it is a betrayal of women confronting far worse oppression than I am not to buy and read the book about their struggle.

A collection of documents and speeches from the first Congress of Angolan Women, held in 1983, it's very suggestive of the problems faced by Angolan women during the colonial war and in the revolutionary society, and of their efforts to overcome them. As such, it is a very useful source for research in the area, especially as regards party attitudes towards women; but for the general, interested reader it is a frustrating book.

Official conference speeches and documents are rarely concerned with complex, concrete analyses, the worrying of specific problems and their ramifications or exposure of contradictions. So that they are not, on their own, sufficient to convey any real understanding of the situation. They need to be placed in their historical and theoretical context. Marga Holness' introduction is far too sketchy and vague in this respect, and completely lacking in any critical perspective on the positions expressed in the documents.

This is important because they reveal contradictions and problems which one would like to have more information about. For instance, Holness says: 'The fact that there are at present only four women on the Central Committee of the MPLA-Workers' Party is a reflection not of male discrimination, but rather of the need for women to advance.' How does she know? What evidence can she adduce to convince us? Especially since the documents do mention male prejudice against women among comrades? What form does it take? *Machismo* is also mentioned, but what is being done about it, other than urging *women* to emancipate themselves by 'creating conditions for their conscious activity in production, in raising their educational level, participating in political and social life and enjoying their legitimate right to freely con-

sented motherhood.

Women's 'double shift' – in paid work and at home – is referred to as a problem: why is socialisation of domestic tasks recommended to the virtual exclusion of suggestions that men might share domestic labour and child care? How does this relate to the advocacy of monogamy, which tends to isolate women from each other? Is monogamy, indeed, the only, or even the most progressive, alternative to polygamy?

Why is there tolerance of western fashions, but not of western feminism? Why is there such stress on distancing themselves from western feminism? – is it based on genuine understanding of its conditions and contradictions and hence its differences from those of Angolan women? Or is it, at least in part, based on misrepresentations in western (capitalist-controlled, male-controlled) media? Or is it a tactical approach to ward off criticisms of anti-men attitudes and bourgeois tendencies?

Are the constant exhortations to educate the masses of women in areas like health and child care evidence of a certain elitism of attitude among party women? Even perhaps of over-certainty as to the rightness of the party line? Or is this just the rhetoric of rallying the troops?

One can imagine good reasons, both material and tactical, for many of the positions behind these questions, but I, for one, do not feel that my guesses are good enough. And for many readers, I suspect, the absence of explanation and discussion could add to, rather than diminish, the misunderstandings between women in different societies. This is a pity; because we have so much to learn, and Angolan women clearly have much to teach us.

Canterbury

MARGARET MARSHMENT

More Than the Parts: biology and politics

Edited by LINDA BIRKE and JONATHAN SILVERTOWN (London, Pluto, 1984). 268pp. £7.95

Readers of this journal will need no convincing that many biological theories and practices aid the oppression of working-class people, especially blacks, and countries dominated by imperialism. But why is that so? Is it a problem of bad science, or perhaps abuse of science? Can the oppressive aspects of science be separated off from some otherwise neutral core?

The essays in this book show how the oppressive uses of biology are embodied in its fundamental concepts of nature. As the title suggests, the problem lies in the way biology tends to reduce living systems to the sum of their parts, or to just some of their parts, or to putative proper-

ties of individuals. Through this reduction of the whole to the parts, biology more easily represents capitalist society as a product of nature and manipulates people in the name of progress. Racist and imperialist science is a major focus in only a few of the essays, but nearly all of them can be connected by the reader to such themes. The scope of the essays is wide, ranging through psychosurgery and the (legal) use of drugs to contain social problems; the historical origins of biological reductionism; the tie-in between imperialist programmes of population control and certain sections of the ecological and environmental movement; the sociobiologist's account of 'human nature' to the use of drugs and hormone treatments on women; the politics inherent in new technologies designed to control/replace labour, and the use of animals in biological research.

Impressive as the collection is, it reveals some limitations in radical critiques of science. Many of the essays rightly criticise the 'nature/nurture' dichotomy, and interactionist models as well, but then counterpose a 'dialectical' model that is not clearly distinguished from an interactionist one: the 'environment' (nurture) remains some external thing impinging upon individuals, who, in turn, remain objects of its force. The dialectical model on offer here does not go very far in conceptualising biology and environment as objects of human labour.

In addition, the critique identifies the enemy too narrowly – the most obviously reactionary aspects of biology, which often appear as throwbacks to previous decades or centuries (neo-Darwinism, Malthus, even Adam Smith). While it is certainly worth exploring such similarities, the essays tend to do so in a way that misses the aspects specific to the late twentieth century, both in the biological theories and in their political uses. (Thatcher's ideology is repeatedly compared to nineteenth-century ones, even though it could just as well be compared to Healey's monetarism.)

A recurring example of an overly narrow enemy is 'competition', to which the essays counterpose 'cooperation' as if this dichotomy corresponded to capitalism versus socialism. It ignores the early twentieth-century capitalist rediscovery of cooperation, when a revised neo-Darwinism transferred competition from individuals to nations, while calling for cooperation among the citizens in the workplace, army, etc. The drive for 'national efficiency' portrayed the nation as a harmoniously functioning organism – a model later extended by socio-technical systems theory. An essay by the New World Agriculture Group runs up against precisely this problem in proposing alternative methods for a cooperative farm to compete on the capitalist market.

Lastly, the essays generally emphasise how science justifies the existing order, at the expense of looking at the revolutionary role of science in undermining pre-capitalist social relations and drawing people into wage-labour and commodity exchange. This process of course

involves overt coercion, but also more subtle redefinitions of human needs. It is not good enough to counterpose human needs to profits, because capital expands by leading us to define our needs in possessive individualistic ways – a very modern example being surrogate mothers and other wonders of genetic engineering. Yet, as the editors' 'Introduction' regrets, the collection omits biotechnology, that vanguard of capitalist revolution.

London

LES LEVIDOV

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